

# The Origins and Development of *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower (2015)*

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September 2017



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**Photography Credit:** The Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Chancellorsville (CG 62) stands by as plane guard for the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) as the sun sets over the horizon. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Joshua Scott.

**Approved by:**

**September 2017**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric V. Thompson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr. Eric V. Thompson, Director and VP  
Center for Strategic Studies

## Executive Summary

This study describes and analyzes the origins, creation, announcement, and dissemination of the U.S. Navy–Marine Corps–Coast Guard *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower: Forward, Engaged, Ready* (CS21R), published in March 2015.

It also describes reactions to the document’s publication, and provides a series of conclusions, observations, and recommendations derived from the initial description and analysis. Its emphasis throughout is mostly on the Navy, although the document was a tri-service effort signed by the heads of the three U.S. sea services, with a signed preface by the U.S. Secretary of the Navy.

This paper begins by exploring the underlying rationales for the revision, and particularly, the changes in the international security environment and the post-Iraq War climate of fiscal restraint. It goes on to discuss the terms of reference (TOR) for the revision effort; the roles of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and his staff, and the Naval War College (NWC); multiservice collaboration; and the impact of budget sequestration and the concomitant drafting and publication of the national defense policy and other Navy documents on the process. The paper then considers the evolution of some of the central tenets of the strategy, questions surrounding the multiple audiences for the document, and staff turnover. It also summarizes the most salient issues debated by the drafters of CS21R while crafting the document.

After describing the public rollout of the revised strategy in March 2015, the paper goes on to discuss the revision’s reception in the services, the Washington policy community, and overseas. The paper concludes by drawing together some insights regarding the Navy’s strategy development processes and outcomes; highlighting some “lessons observed” by key participants in the effort; and endorsing the recommendations of some earlier, related studies. Appendices enable the reader to review the key players in this evolution, as well as identify those whom the study authors corresponded with and interviewed.

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## Glossary

A2/AD	Anti-access and area denial
ADM	Admiral
BBA	Bipartisan Budget Act
BCA	Budget Control Act
BGen	Brigadier General
CAG	Commanders Action Group
CAPT	Captain
CCDR	Combatant Commander
CCMD	Combatant Command
CDR	Commander
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHINFO	Chief of Naval Information
CIMSEC	Center for International Maritime Security
CJA	Comprehensive Joint Assessment
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
CMC	Commandant of the Marine Corps
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
CNWS	Center for Naval Warfare Studies
CRA	Chairman's Risk Assessment
CRIC	CNO's Rapid Innovation Cell
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CS21	Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower (2007)
CS21R	Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower refresh/revision/rewrite (2015)
CSF	Cooperative Strategy Forum
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOD	Department of Defense
DON	Department of the Navy
DPG	Defense Planning Guidance
DSG	Defense Strategic Guidance
EF 21	Expeditionary Force 21
ENS	Ensign

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FEF	Federal Executive Fellows
FFRDC	Federally Funded Research and Development Center
FRAGO	Frag Order
FRP	Fleet Response Plan
FSA	Force Structure Assessment
FY	Fiscal Year
GEF	Guidance for Employment of the Force
Gen	General
GMP	Global Maritime Partnership
HA/DR	Humanitarian assistance/disaster response
IN	Indian Navy
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
ISS	International Seapower Symposium
JOE	Joint Operating Environment
KSIL	Key Strategic Issues List
LCDR	Lieutenant Commander
LCS	Littoral Combat Ship
LOC	Library of Congress
LtCol	Lieutenant Colonel
LtGen	Lieutenant General
MARAD	U.S. Maritime Administration
MCCDC	Marine Corps Combat Development Command
MCWL	Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory
N3/N5	Deputy CNO for Operations, Plans & Strategy
N3/N5B	Assistant Deputy CNO for Operations, Plans and Strategy
N51	Director, Strategy and Policy Division
N513	Head, Strategy Branch
N51B	Deputy Director, Strategy and Policy Division
N8	Deputy CNO for Integration of Capabilities and Resources
N9	Deputy CNO for Warfare Systems
NAVWARCOL	U.S. Naval War College
NDP	Naval Doctrine Publication
NFOSES	Navy Flag Officer and Senior Executive Service Symposium
NHHC	Naval History and Heritage Command
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOC	Naval Operations Concept
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
NSC	National Security Council
NSE	Navy Strategic Enterprise
NSP	Navy Strategic Plan
NSP	Navy Strategic Plan

NSPG	Navy Strategic Programming Guidance
NSS	National Security Strategy
NWC	National War College
NWDC	Navy Warfare Development Command
OLA	Office of Legislative Affairs
ONI	Office of Naval Intelligence
ONR	Office of Naval Research
OPNAV	Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
OPTEMPO	Operational Tempo
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PERSTEMPO	Personnel Tempo
PLA	Peoples Liberation Army (China)
POM	Program Objective Memorandum
PPBE	Planning, Programming, Budget and Execution
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
RADM	Rear Admiral
RDML	Rear Admiral (Lower Half)
SDG	Strategy Discussion Group
SECDEF	Secretary of Defense
SECNAV	Secretary of the Navy
SEG	Senior Executive Group
SES	Senior Executive Service
SIG	Strategic Initiatives Group
SSBN	Ballistic Missile Submarine
SSG	Strategic Studies Group
TOR	Terms of Reference
USCG	United States Coast Guard
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USN	United States Navy
USS	United States Ship
VADM	Vice Admiral
VCNO	Vice Chief of Naval Operations
WAR	Warfare Analysis and Research

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# Introduction

## Admiral Greenert and the revision of the U.S. Navy's strategy

On August 2, 2011, Admiral (ADM) Jonathan Greenert was confirmed to succeed ADM Gary Roughead as the U.S. Navy's 30th Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), to take office the following month. Like his 29 predecessors, ADM Greenert faced issues of Navy readiness, personnel, acquisition, and resources. He was also troubled by the content and effect of the Navy's existing strategy document, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* (CS21), published by all three U.S. sea services back in October 2007.<sup>1</sup>

ADM Greenert was not alone in his concern over the state of Navy strategy.<sup>2</sup> Some maritime experts have periodically argued that the operationally-oriented Navy had routinely neglected strategy, considering it largely irrelevant to meeting the vast and complex demands of day-to-day operations.<sup>3</sup> Critics of the Navy's apparent

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<sup>1</sup> General James T. Conway, Admiral Gary Roughead, and Admiral Thad W. Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* (Washington, DC: U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard, October 2007), [https://www.ise.gov/sites/default/files/Maritime\\_Strategy.pdf](https://www.ise.gov/sites/default/files/Maritime_Strategy.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Some experts went further, insisting that few of what the Navy called its "strategies" were in fact strategic. With their shifting and inconsistent nomenclature, these documents were better understood as "a variety of sub-categories of strategic communications." Moreover, the service had often resisted linking strategy to its programs or force levels, further contributing to its perceived irrelevance. Mr. Bruce Stubbs, "Personal Observations on Creating Navy Strategy" (PowerPoint presentation to the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, July 6, 2015), 10. For more on these points, see Peter M. Swartz with Karin Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1970-2010)*, vol. I: *Comparisons, Contrasts, and Changes* (Alexandria, VA: CNA, December 2011), [https://www.cna.org/cna\\_files/pdf/D0026422.A1.pdf](https://www.cna.org/cna_files/pdf/D0026422.A1.pdf), accessed October 6, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the more recent discussion by Prof. James Holmes, "Does America Have Any Naval Strategists Anymore?" *The Diplomat*, January 12, 2014), [thediplomat.com/authors/james-r-holmes/](http://thediplomat.com/authors/james-r-holmes/). According to the British strategist Colin S. Gray, the United States, while possessing the mightiest naval force in history, "is neither a natural sea power nor does a maritime perspective and precepts dominate its strategic culture." Colin S. Gray, "Strategy in the Nuclear Age: The United States, 1945-1991," in Williamson Murray, Macgregor Knox, and Alvin

disinterest in strategy often cited the eminent political scientist Dr. Samuel P. Huntington, who in an influential 1954 article argued that “if a service does not possess a well-defined strategic concept, the public and political leaders will be confused as to the role of the service . . . and apathetic or hostile to the claims made by the service on the resources of society.”<sup>4</sup>

ADM Greenert believed that some of the core principles and vision articulated in CS21 in 2007 were fundamentally sound—the importance of forward presence, the enduring need to work with allies and partners, and functions such as deterrence, sea control, and power projection—but that the document needed to be updated to reflect changing realities at home and abroad.<sup>5</sup> He also wanted to convey to the world that the U.S. Navy was about “warfighting first,” a concept that he believed in and felt had been diluted in the 2007 document.

He was supported in many of his views by other members of the U.S. Navy leadership, his fellow sea service chiefs, key members of his staff, and several outside commentators. They sometimes differed, however, on specific parts of the CNO’s vision, as well as on which parts of the 2007 publication needed to be changed, and how. Fulfilling his vision and deciding among these differing views took almost four years and many hundreds of hours of staff effort. This paper seeks to explain the major aspects of that effort.

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Bernstein, eds., *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 594.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Samuel P. Huntington, “National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy,” United States Naval Institute *Proceedings* 80, no. 5 (May 1954), 483.

<sup>5</sup> The 2007 document had generated significant criticism as well as praise. Supporters lauded its systemic, cooperative approach to the maritime environment. Opponents criticized it for the same reasons. For very thorough analyses, see Robert O. Work and Jan van Tol, “A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower: An Assessment,” Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, March 26, 2008, file:///Users/williamrosenau/Downloads/B.20080326.A\_Cooperative\_Stra.pdf, accessed September 20, 2015; and Robert C. Rubel, “What the Critics of the Navy’s Strategy Get Wrong,” War on the Rocks, January 6, 2015, <http://warontherocks.com/2015/01/what-critics-of-the-navys-strategy-get-wrong/>, accessed July 17, 2015. A comprehensive treatment of the development of CS21 is in CAPT Peter D. Haynes, *Toward a New Maritime Strategy: American Naval Thinking in the Post-Cold War Era* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2015). For an overview of the document, its influence and criticisms, see Peter M. Swartz with Karin Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001-2010): Strategy, Policy, Concept, and Vision Documents* (Alexandria VA: CNA, December 2011), 143-193. See also Sebastian Bruns, “U.S. Navy Strategy and American Seapower—Politics, Capstone Documents, and Major Naval Operations, 1981-2011” (Ph.D. diss.: University of Kiel, December 1, 2014), 277-288; and idem, *U.S. Naval Strategy and National Security: The Evolution of American Maritime Power* (London: Routledge, in press).

ADM Greenert's attention to the strategy revision that he had initiated waxed and waned throughout his tour. To officers assigned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations' Strategy and Policy Division (OPNAV N51), it appeared that the CNO was unsure as to what he wanted, calling at first for a "refresh," then for a more comprehensive "revision," then again returning to a "refresh" for a short time, and then finally requesting a more comprehensive revision again.<sup>6</sup>

In 2014 ADM Greenert became re-energized by key members of his staff, and focused on the health of the Navy's strategy community—a seemingly unlikely concern for a career submariner and former deputy CNO for Integration of Capabilities and Resources (N8). In his view, based on his experience in considering the revision to CS21 off and on throughout the previous two and a half years—and despite prodigious efforts by the OPNAV staff, especially N51—Navy strategic thinking had atrophied, and Navy strategists were an under-resourced and unappreciated lot. He then set about to try to fix things. In the perhaps overly dramatic view of a very prominent naval officer-strategist, "for the first time in the post-Cold war era, a CNO had recognized the inability of the Navy to think strategically and set a course to improve it."<sup>7</sup>

Part of ADM Greenert's response to this perceived gap was the establishment in 2014 of the Navy Strategic Enterprise (NSE), a formal effort to better align the work of Navy staffs and organizations responsible for strategy development, requirements, and programs.<sup>8</sup> Another part was a renewed thrust to get a revised Navy strategy document out the door and to its prospective audiences. By March 2015, he had achieved that goal, signing off on and promulgating a revised *Cooperative Strategy* alongside the Commandants of the Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

## Study purpose and approach

This paper was drafted at the direction of the Navy's Deputy Director of Strategy and Policy (OPNAV, N51B), and with the support, cooperation and encouragement of numerous officers and civilians in the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Coast Guard, including the Chief and Vice Chief of Naval Operations.

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<sup>6</sup> Mr. Bruce Stubbs (OPNAV N51B) comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>7</sup> Haynes, *Toward a New Maritime Strategy*, 246-247.

<sup>8</sup> On the Navy Strategic Enterprise, see Catherine Lea and Margaret Polski, *Assessment of the Navy Strategic Enterprise: Integrating, Coordinating, and Aligning Navy Stakeholders to Develop, Communicate, and Assess Navy Strategy* (Arlington, VA: CNA, September 2015).

Not all Navy officers involved in the process saw value in the project, however, and some declined to participate.

## Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to

- describe objectively why and how the 2015 version of *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* was created, disseminated, and initially received;
- provide insights into how the U.S. Navy and its strategists thought and acted at the time;
- draw conclusions and recommendations for consideration on how to improve the process of Navy strategy making;
- provide an example for future generations of maritime strategists to consider on how to assist in crafting their own similar Navy “capstone” documents; and<sup>9</sup>
- provide a reference for future analysts trying to understand the U.S. Navy of the early twenty-first century.

The paper is not designed to

- advocate for or critique the content of the strategy or the motives and beliefs of its creators; or
- enhance or denigrate the reputations of those involved.

Critiquing the strategy is a worthwhile endeavor, and we note appropriately where others have done so, but it is not the primary or intended purpose of this study. The study does provide, however, a foundation upon which others can build their own analyses, and the authors certainly encourage them to do so.

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<sup>9</sup> In this regard, this paper continues an earlier multivolume CNA “capstone strategy series” on the development of U.S. Navy strategy through 2011, available at <https://www.cna.org/research/capstone-strategy-series>. For an abridged two-page version, see Peter M. Swartz, “Reflections on U.S. Strategy before 2007,” *Working Papers: Maritime Strategy EMC Chair Symposium* (Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, 22–24 March 2016), 19–20. See also Haynes, *Toward a New Maritime Strategy*; Bruns, “U.S. Navy Strategy and American Seapower”; and Amund Lundesgaard, “Controlling the Sea and Projecting Power: U.S. Navy Strategy and Force Structure after the Cold War” (Ph.D. diss.: University of Oslo, 2016).

## Approach

This paper traces the origins and development of the revised 2015 version of CS21. Initial expectations were that the effort would be a relatively quick “refresh” of the existing strategy. In fact, the process would go on for nearly four years. This process is described in a chronological fashion, although not narrowly so. The focus is on central events and key themes, rather than an on a precise recounting of day-to-day activities. It goes without saying that personality and organizational clashes are part of virtually every human endeavor involving more than one person. Such disputes were part of the rewriting of CS21, but they are not emphasized in this account.

This exploration of the origins and development of the revised CS21 relies heavily on primary sources. These include internal Navy communications, public statements, briefings, and—most importantly—interviews with and correspondence from participants, including then-CNO ADM Greenert, senior OPNAV civilian and military personnel, Navy action officers, and representatives from the other sea services. (See Appendix B for a complete list of interviewees.) Perhaps to a greater degree than for the U.S. Army or Air Force, the development of a maritime strategy is both an ad hoc and a collective endeavor that includes elements technically outside the service.<sup>10</sup> Naval strategists are not confined to the precincts of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Operations, Plans and Strategy (N3/N5), but contribute from perches elsewhere in OPNAV, in the Department of the Navy (DON) Secretariat, in the fleet, and in education centers, research and analysis institutions, universities, and industry.<sup>11</sup> This account therefore draws on interviews with and correspondence from individuals outside the maritime services as well. Some key participants responded to our requests for comments on earlier drafts of this paper, and their

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<sup>10</sup> On the differences among the services’ strategy development processes, see Lea and Polski, *Assessment of the Navy Strategic Enterprise*; James A. Russell, Donald Abenheim, James J. Wirtz, Thomas-Durrell Young, and Diana Wueger, *Navy Strategy Development: Strategy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Monterey CA: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2015); and Thomas-Durrell Young, “When Programming Trumps Policy and Plans: The Case of the U.S. Department of the Navy,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, (online) May 10, 2016, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2016.1176564>.

<sup>11</sup> For example, during the previous decade CNA—the Navy’s Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC)—held workshops to help the Navy’s strategy development process. See for example, Michael Gerson and Alison Lawler Russell, *American Grand Strategy and Seapower: Conference Report*, CRM D0025988.A2/Final (Alexandria VA: CNA, November 2011); and Peter M. Swartz, *Quicklook Report: 1 December 2010 Workshop: Developing Navy Strategic Concepts for 2011 and Beyond* (Alexandria, VA: CNA, December 9, 2010).

comments provided important additional data and insights. (See Appendix C for a listing of participants who commented on earlier drafts).<sup>12</sup>

We do not claim to have read every relevant document or interviewed every relevant player, given constraints of time, money and availability. Accordingly, there may well be issues, processes, milestones, and effects that we did not surface, and therefore did not mention or analyze.

There is scant secondary literature on the making of CS21R—a void this paper seeks to fill.<sup>13</sup> There is, however, a certain literature published after its promulgation, commenting on its content. We examined and analyzed much of this material as well, and included citations and some extracts from their analyses in this paper.

To ensure wide and effective future distribution and use, the study is unclassified, and did not involve use of any classified sources. This limitation was not a serious constraint, however, since most references on the subject were unclassified, as was the resultant document under study—CS21R.

## Strategy and the U.S. Navy

This paper is retrospective, but its purpose is ultimately prospective: To assist future generations of staff officers in conceptualizing, creating, disseminating and using Navy “capstone documents,” including “strategies.” To be sure, “strategy” is a notoriously contested concept, both inside and outside the service. Within the Navy, terms like “strategy,” “vision,” and “concepts” have been used almost interchangeably.<sup>14</sup> As a service heavily focused on demanding current operations, the

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<sup>12</sup> In many instances, these participants’ review comments were critical in fleshing out our observations and providing us with a better understanding of CS21R’s evolution. In short, we considered these review comments as crucial data and evidence in accounting for the myriad organizational processes that shaped and guided this recent iteration of the U.S. Navy’s “capstone” strategy document. Hence, we depart somewhat from the scholarly convention of citations and references by attributing these key participants’ salient comments in their reviews of earlier drafts of this paper. Some of the attributions on the more contentious assertions or observations contained in this report involved citing emails from or interviews with the participant; most of the attributions, though, merely note that the participant made his or her remarks, or elaborated on a particular point, on the reviewer form and/or directly on the draft sent for review.

<sup>13</sup> We reviewed Haynes, *Toward a New Maritime Strategy*, 247–250. We also reviewed two 2015 studies on the Navy Strategic Enterprise, of which the drafting of CS21R formed a part: Lea and Polski, *Assessment of the Navy Strategic Enterprise*; Russell et al., *Navy Strategy Development*; and Young, “When Programming Trumps Policy and Plans.”

<sup>14</sup> OPNAV used a variety of terms over time to categorize their approach to the changes that were being made to CS21, including “refresh,” “revise,” and “rewrite.” On Navy terminological

Navy is frequently imprecise in its conceptual terminology and definitions in a way that no surface warfare officer or submariner would be in his or her use of the terms associated with the internal operation of a warship. But as imprecise as the phraseology can be, and as reluctant as some in the service have been to fully embrace the Navy Strategic Enterprise, it seems almost certain that the Navy will continue to produce “strategies” and related “capstone documents.”<sup>15</sup>

## Maritime strategy and the Navy

The focus throughout this paper is most often on the Navy. Since at least the 1980s, the Navy has viewed its evolving strategy as inevitably and inherently integrating the ideas, operations and forces of the other two U.S. sea services—the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Coast Guard. Successive Chiefs of Naval Operations and their staffs mostly rejected the notion that a meaningful “Navy” strategy could be created without significant participation by U.S. Marine Corps officers, or promulgated without the signature of the Commandant of the Marine Corps. Since the end of the Cold War and the rise in salience to the nation of maritime security operations, many in the Navy and Marine Corps became increasingly supportive of the necessity for including the U.S. Coast Guard and its Commandant and staff as well. Accordingly, the 2007 version of *A Cooperative Strategy* had been written by an integrated tri-service drafting team, and signed by all three service chiefs. The same would be true of its successor.

The development process and the resulting successor document were therefore certainly tri-service, but the Navy took the lead—including kicking off the effort in the first place; drafting; and coordinating the adjudication process among the services. Most importantly, CS21R—while a tri-service *maritime* strategy—was also the Navy’s strategy: The Marines had *Expeditionary Force 21*, and the Coast Guard its own quadrad of strategy documents. For the Navy, however, CS21R, like its predecessor, was intended to serve as its *service* capstone document, as well as an umbrella document for all the sea services. Moreover, it was the Navy that commissioned this report and requested its data and analyses.

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imprecision, see Peter M. Swartz with Karin Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts: Introduction, Background and Analyses* (Alexandria, VA: December 2011), 20–41; and Peter Swartz, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategy, Policy, Vision and Concept Documents: What to Consider Before You Write One* (Alexandria, VA: CNA, March 2009), 16–17.

<sup>15</sup> On support for the Navy Strategic Enterprise, see Lea and Polski, *Assessment of the Navy Strategic Enterprise*.

## Acronym conventions

When it was issued in November 2007, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* was reflexively and inevitably referred to within the sea services by the acronym “CS21.” To distinguish that document from its revised successor, the acronym “CS21R” was adopted by the sea service staffs in referring to the latter. Once “CS21R” was approved and disseminated, the services began to refer to it merely as “CS21.”

This study discusses both documents. Consequently, it adopts the convention of referring to the 2007 document as “CS21” and to the 2015 document as “CS21R.”

## The CS21R Story

This narrative forms the bulk of this report, and provides the data upon which its conclusions, insights, and recommendations are based.

### The changing global security environment and the Navy's role

"I wanted to make it current," ADM Greenert recalled—a "refresh" of the existing document rather than the creation of an entirely new strategy.<sup>16</sup> Specifically, Greenert expected the document to reflect the changes in the international security environment that had taken place in the past four years.<sup>17</sup> The 2007 strategy had posited a liberal post-Cold War international order in which the "global maritime commons" was policed by a U.S.-led coalition of maritime partners willing and able to confront piracy and other threats. It spoke about integrating seapower within broader applications of national power; it recognized the need for both high-end warfighting and smaller-scale stability/security roles; and it integrated three services across the breadth of a seapower vision.<sup>18</sup> By 2011, many military officers and civilian officials, academics, and politicians had concluded that the security environment had grown considerably more complex than it had been in 2007.<sup>19</sup> Even the lead author of the 2007 document, by-then-retired U.S. Navy Commander (CDR) Bryan McGrath, urged a relook.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Authors' interview with CNO ADM Jonathan Greenert, Pentagon, Arlington, VA, July 27, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Authors' interview with Mr. Bruce Stubbs, Pentagon, Arlington, VA, February 5, 2015.

<sup>18</sup> Captain John McLain's characterization, in commenting on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>19</sup> In CAPT John McLain's view, "CS21 was a product of a GWOT [Global War on Terrorism] mindset at the national/DOD level. By 2011, we recognized that there were other emerging challenges that did not fit cleanly within that worldview (e.g., an emerging China)." See also CAPT Charles C. Moore, "Revitalizing the Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower," *Parameters* (Summer 2011), 49-61.

<sup>20</sup> Bryan McGrath, "Scrap the Maritime Strategy?" Information Dissemination blog (Dec 4, 2009), <http://www.informationdissemination.net/2009/12/scrap-maritime-strategy.html>.

Four years after CS21 was published, the global strategic and domestic budget environments had not unfolded in the manner anticipated in CS21.<sup>21</sup> China's blue-water maritime power was growing, and in the view of many inside and outside the Pentagon, Beijing was fast becoming a regional maritime rival—if not an outright adversary.<sup>22</sup> New threats in domains like cyber and space, and the challenge posed by anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) had come to the forefront of U.S. security concerns.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, these changes in the strategic landscape—echoing aspects of the Cold War environment, at least to some observers—were coming at a time of shrinking resources for national defense and other “nondiscretionary” spending, as illustrated by the Budget Control Act of 2011 and accompanying mechanisms like budget sequestration.<sup>24</sup>

In the view of the new CNO, Navy strategy had to reflect these developments at home and abroad. The ability of the Navy to operate forward, and the capacity to wage war and prevail, were exceptional and essential contributions to the nation's defense. In ADM Greenert's view, any refreshed strategy had to emphasize these capabilities. As he said in his first message to the fleet, the service had to place warfighting first: “That's our craft, we've got to be good at it, and that's what our number one focus will be.”<sup>25</sup>

CS21 had elevated humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HA/DR) to one of six “core capabilities”—a mistake in the view of some critics both inside and outside the Navy and indicative of the document's perceived failure to recognize the primacy of the Navy's warfighting role.<sup>26</sup> Writing in January 2012, one senior OPNAV civilian official considered that much of CS21 had been written in a “non-military, non-

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<sup>21</sup> CAPT John McLain's characterization, in commenting on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>22</sup> See for example *Annual Report to the Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2011* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2011); and U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense* (Washington, DC: DOD, January 2012), 2.

<sup>23</sup> Authors' telephone interview with Vice Admiral James G. Foggo, III, July 20, 2015.

<sup>24</sup> Also, the NATO alliance had updated its own maritime strategy in March 2011. See the *Alliance Maritime Strategy* (Brussels: NATO, 18 March 2011), [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_75615.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_75615.htm). The United States contributed to and concurred in the update. This study found little evidence that this effort and document influenced the U.S. Navy significantly in drafting CS21R, however.

<sup>25</sup> “New CNO ADM Greenert Sends a Message to the Fleet,” September 23, 2011, [http://www.navy.mil/management/videodbdata/transcript/110923\\_1.txt](http://www.navy.mil/management/videodbdata/transcript/110923_1.txt), accessed August 2, 2015.

<sup>26</sup> The five other core capabilities named in the 2007 CS-21 were forward presence, deterrence, sea control, power projection, and maritime security. Conway, Roughead, and Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2007), 6–8.

warfighting” tone.<sup>27</sup> In his view, placing a premium on the use of seapower to defend what the document called “the lifelines of the modern global economy,”<sup>28</sup> CS21 had the effect of diluting the “importance of the Navy’s ‘naval power’ to set the military conditions for achieving national objectives.”<sup>29</sup>

In many ways the CNO’s views on the primacy of warfighting and the subordination of other elements of the Navy’s contribution to the nation represented a continuation of the internal dialogue that had produced CS21 in 2007.<sup>30</sup> As that document’s lead author commented a year after its publication, “This tension between warfighting and everything else was the main feature of the internal debates surrounding the development of the Maritime Strategy.”<sup>31</sup>

## Terms of reference

Officers and civilians assigned to the Navy’s Strategy and Policy Division (N51)—charged with briefing and otherwise promulgating CS21—well understood the decreasing relevance of the original CS21 document as the years progressed since its release in 2007. As ADM Greenert prepared to take office on September 23, 2011, the deputy head of the Strategy Branch (N513), Mr. Robert Marshall, worked with the prospective head of the CNO’s Commander’s Action Group (N00Z), Mr. Bryan Clark, to include revising the Navy’s strategy on the new CNO’s “to-do” list.<sup>32</sup>

## Bryan McGrath’s advice

In the fall of 2011, ADM Greenert asked the principal drafter of the 2007 document, now-retired CDR Bryan McGrath, to brief his Transition Team on the processes used in creating that publication, and on the substantive changes he thought were needed

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<sup>27</sup> Memorandum from Mr. Bruce Stubbs, Deputy Director Strategy and Policy Division (N51B), to Director, Strategy and Policy Division (N51), “Refresh of CS21,” January 25, 2012, 2.

<sup>28</sup> CS21 (2007), p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> Memorandum from Mr. Bruce Stubbs, Deputy Director Strategy and Policy Division (N51B), to Director, Strategy and Policy Division (N51), “Refresh of CS21,” January 25, 2012, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> Recounted in Haynes, *Toward a New Maritime Strategy*, 172-238. Haynes is clearly sympathetic to the Navy’s giving greater visibility and priority to the important non-warfighting roles that it plays.

<sup>31</sup> Bryan McGrath (October 2008), cited in Swartz with Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001-2010)*, 171.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Marshall comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

in view of the changed strategic environment. Among other things, McGrath recommended that the new document explain why the country needed a strong, globally deployed Navy, identify specific threats to the nation, articulate how the Navy would respond to those threats, endorse a “three-hub” forward deployment construct, reference a classified companion document, embrace Navy-Marine Corps integration, and make a clear argument for an adequate industrial base.<sup>33</sup>

## The TORs

### *The First (CNO Transition Team) TOR*

ADM Greenert’s transition team, headed by Vice Admiral (VADM) Rick Hunt, included Rear Admiral (RDML) James G. Foggo, III. RDML Foggo worked with Bryan Clark to draft “terms of reference” (TOR) to inform creation of the new strategy document, which would become known as CS21R.<sup>34</sup> This initial early October 2011 TOR included, inter alia, the following elements:<sup>35</sup>

- Two pages (out of five) describing the changes that had occurred in the global security environment since CS21 had been published in 2007, with an emphasis on the rise of China and Chinese naval expansion
- Document title and length (16 pp.) to remain the same (“refresh not a rewrite”)
- Target audience: “our national leadership and Capitol Hill;” no need for “Conversations with the Country” as in 2006

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<sup>33</sup> Bryan McGrath, “Developing Maritime Strategy,” *Working Papers: Maritime Strategy EMC Chair Symposium*, (Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, March 22-24, 2016), 15.

<sup>34</sup> Admiral Foggo was assigned, at the time, to Naples, Italy, as a RDML and Deputy Commander, U.S. Sixth Fleet, Director of Operations and Intelligence (N3) on the staff of the Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa, and Commander Submarine Group Eight. He was temporarily called back to serve on ADM Greenert’s transition team. Previously, as a captain, he had participated in the final stages of the development of the 2007 version of CS21. He had also been a Navy Moreau Scholar at Harvard and an Olmsted Scholar in France, and served later as a Joint Staff J-5 division chief, executive assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and executive officer to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). He would later serve as Director of the OPNAV Assessments Division (N81) and then Assistant Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Operations, Plans and Strategy) (N3/N5B) as a Rear Admiral (charged with moving the CS21 rewrite forward). He would then command the U.S. Sixth Fleet as a Vice Admiral.

<sup>35</sup> *Terms of Reference for Refresh of a Cooperative Strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (n.d. and unsigned but RDML Jamie Foggo identified as “POC”). Copy received by Dr. Peter Dombrowski on October 6, 2011. Dombrowski files, Naval War College, Newport RI.

- Same six overarching “strategic imperatives,” but reordered
- Same six “core capabilities,” but replacing or dropping HA/DR to be considered
- Changes to the “six [sic]” implementation priorities.<sup>36</sup> The TOR listed six that it recommended be included
- Naval War College lead; OPNAV N51 as “OPNAV staff liaison”
- “Adequate funding,” but implying less than the “\$1M” that had funded CS21
- “No obvious need for an extensive collaborative approach with USMC and USCG. A consultative approach is more appropriate, but needed”
- A “SECRET Supplement for Navy audiences focused on Joint Assured Access”
- No more than 12 months’ work. To be unveiled in May 2012 at the Naval War College.

### *The Second TOR*

A few weeks after the above TOR was formulated and disseminated, a revised version was circulated. It differed from the original in only one—albeit very important—respect: The first version had assigned the lead for the refresh to the president of the Naval War College and his faculty and staff, with the Director, OPNAV N51 as the “OPNAV Staff Liaison responsible for OPNAV integration of the project.” The revised TOR assigned the lead to the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Operations, Plans, and Strategy) (OPNAV N3/N5), with the Director, Strategy and Policy Division (OPNAV N51) as his executive agent, and the president of the Naval War College and his faculty and staff in support of OPNAV N3/N5.<sup>37</sup> This change was in accordance with the strong views and preferences of VADM Bruce Clingan, the N3/N5, and RDML Michael E. Smith, the N51.<sup>38</sup>

### *The Third (OPNAV) TOR*

May 2012 had been the target date set by the two successive TORs for unveiling the “refresh.” Instead, on May 18, and after numerous intermediate drafts, OPNAV

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<sup>36</sup> Actually, there had been three.

<sup>37</sup> *Revised Terms of Reference for Refresh of a Cooperative Strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Copy received by John Berry on October 26, 2011. John Berry files, MCCDC/CD&I, Quantico VA.

<sup>38</sup> John McLain comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

circulated yet a third TOR: *Terms of Reference for Revision of “A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower.”*<sup>39</sup>

This new TOR included several significant departures from its two predecessors, not the least of which was the substitution of “revision” for “refresh” in the title. The TOR briefly acknowledged the contribution of the Naval War College in emphasizing specific geostrategic changes that necessitated the revision, and directed the following:

- Retention of the title of CS21 and some key terminology
- A concise, tri-service document<sup>40</sup>
- Emphasis on warfighting
- The “defense of the global system will not be a significant theme”
- Use of an “ends-ways-means” framework<sup>41</sup>
- “Clear means guidance”; “consequential and realistic strategic resourcing priorities,” and “resource constraints by identifying meaningful tradeoffs”
- A Navy-only “Classified Annex”
- “Clear linkages to national strategic and military guidance”
- OPNAV (N3/N5) to take the lead, with N51 as executive agent (no mention of any further role for the Naval War College).
- CS21R to be “fully and openly coordinated with USMC and USCG staff counterparts”
- OPNAV N3/N5 consultation with the Navy Secretariat

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<sup>39</sup> *Terms of Reference for Revision of “A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* (n.d. and unsigned but CAPT John McLain identified as “POC”). PDF copy dated May 18, 2012 in N51B files, OPNAV N51, Washington, DC.

<sup>40</sup> According to several interviewees, various CS21R drafts would not make it through the coordination process because of their excessive length. However, the final document proved to be roughly twice as long as the 2007 version.

<sup>41</sup> However, in the judgment of some of the individuals involved in the development of CS21R, the CNO never fully subscribed to the “ends, ways, and means” approach. William Rosenau telephone interview with RDML Michael Smith, April 20, 2015.

- Release of CS21R and “Classified Annex” by September 2012 (four months from the date of the TOR), “to inform POM 15 development”

Missing from this last TOR was any discussion of who the target audience for this document was to be.

The phraseology “clear means guidance”; “consequential and realistic strategic resourcing priorities,” and “resource constraints by identifying meaningful tradeoffs” signaled that this document, unlike its predecessor, would address force design and requirements to some extent. CS21 had not done so, and had been criticized for that omission.<sup>42</sup>

The guidelines contained in the TOR provided an agreed-upon foundation of the document’s role and contents—at least within N51—but many points of reference were altered or outright abandoned as the document took shape in the dynamic years that followed.<sup>43</sup>

## Who was the audience?

Identifying the target audience proved to be a thorny issue throughout development of CS21R.<sup>44</sup> It seemed clear to most participants that the CNO was looking for a document that was generally authoritative for any audience: The naval officer corps, Capitol Hill, OSD, friends and allies, potential adversaries...whomever. Meanwhile, the original TORs had targeted OSD and Capitol Hill, while dismissing the general American population as a target. Many N51 staff officers appeared to be targeting OPNAV N8 and the Program Objective Memorandum (POM) process.<sup>45</sup> The Naval War College’s Center for Naval Warfare Studies (CNWS), believing that CS21 had been a success due to its positive influence overseas, often focused on the need to continue

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<sup>42</sup> See, for example, John Lehman, “A Bravura Performance,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 133 (November 2007), 22-24.

<sup>43</sup> John McLain comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>44</sup> This phenomenon was not unique to CS21R. See Swartz, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategy, Policy, Vision and Concept Documents*, 39; and idem, Swartz and Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1970-2010): Comparisons, Contrasts and Changes, Vol. I* (Alexandria VA: CNA, December 2011), 5. On whom a proper audience should include, see Robert O. Work and Jan van Tol, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower: An Assessment*. CSBA Backgrounder (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, March 26, 2008), 2, citing Huntington.

<sup>45</sup> Peter M. Swartz interactions with numerous N51 officers.

hitting that target.<sup>46</sup> They did not discern that the initial OPNAV N51 writing team shared this view, however.<sup>47</sup>

The deliberate choice made early on to publish CS21 as an unclassified document reduced its potential influence on the officer corps, the Joint Staff, the combatant commanders, and their Navy component staffs—whether they were specifically targeted or not. It did, however, considerably broaden its potential readership beyond the U.S. military.<sup>48</sup>

## Keeping pace with the CNO

ADM Greenert began his term of office with a public endorsement of CS21 to the leaders of most of the world’s navies, noting, however, that he intended to “sharpen its focus here and there.”<sup>49</sup> But he did not wait for the “refresh” of CS21 to propound his views on Navy strategy and policy—nor could he. The nature of his position demanded that he promptly and constantly take charge, make decisions, and provide guidance to his staff, the fleet, and the Navy shore establishment. Upon taking office, he was immediately responsible for developing the next routine iteration of the Navy’s Program Objective Memorandum (POM) and the service’s annual budget submission to the Congress, and for implementing policies emanating from the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of the Navy, and their staffs.

To signal his broad intent, directly upon taking office he published his *Sailing Directions*, providing his vision for the Navy and propounding a mantra of “Warfighting first. Operate forward. Be ready.”<sup>50</sup> In four subsequent annual *Navigation Plans*, he provided more detail on prospective future programs to carry

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<sup>46</sup> Former Dean Barney Rubel e-mails to Peter Swartz.

<sup>47</sup> Dr. Peter Dombrowski (NWC/CNWS) comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>48</sup> For more on this point, see Swartz, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategy, Policy, Vision and Concept Documents*, 44.

<sup>49</sup> *Twentieth International Seapower Symposium: Report of the Proceedings: 18–21 October 2011* (Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, 2013), 7, [https://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/f8a3c9b0-000c-4760-96ef-02f5020da432/ISS\\_XX.aspx](https://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/f8a3c9b0-000c-4760-96ef-02f5020da432/ISS_XX.aspx).

<sup>50</sup> *CNO’s Sailing Directions*, undated, [http://www.navy.mil/cno/cno\\_sailing\\_direction\\_final-lowres.pdf](http://www.navy.mil/cno/cno_sailing_direction_final-lowres.pdf), accessed October 25, 2015. The *Sailing Directions* were released following the change of command ceremony, on September 23, 2011

out the vision in the *Sailing Directions*.<sup>51</sup> He also issued three retrospective *Position Reports*, taking fixes on where he saw the Navy at the time and discussing any course and speed changes in the offing.<sup>52</sup> All of these documents were parsed by same three “tenets” he had introduced in his original *Sailing Directions*. Neither the *Sailing Directions* nor the *Navigation Plans* mentioned CS21 or CS21R (until the 2015 *Navigation Plan*).<sup>53</sup> Nor, in the view of some in OPNAV N51, did they provide sufficient explanatory rationale and context to be able to serve as adequate statements of “Commander’s intent,” useful for strategy-drafters.<sup>54</sup>

Each of the three *Position Reports*, however, gave a status report on CS21R. The October 2012 report noted that “with the other sea services, we will revise our maritime strategy.”<sup>55</sup> The 2013 report said that, “We completed the initial draft of our maritime strategy . . . but did not publish it.” The November 2014 *Position Report* averred that, “We completed a final draft. . . and will publish it by the end of calendar year 2014” (a deadline that would not be met). These documents were not often coordinated with the strategy drafters in OPNAV N51, or with their colleagues in the other two sea services.<sup>56</sup>

In the view of some Navy officers and civilians, especially in the OPNAV N8 and N9 directorates, this was all the guidance they believed they needed—and thought the Navy should have—to develop the Navy’s program and budget, and to promulgate further programmatic and operational policies. Many of them—but not the CNO—saw a formal tri-service strategy document as superfluous.

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<sup>51</sup> “CNO’s Navigation Plan 2013-2017” offered specific guidance on organizing, training, and equipping Navy forces over the next four years. “CNO’s Navigation Plan 2013-2017,” undated [July 2012], <http://www.navy.mil/cno/Navplan2012-2017-V-Final.pdf>, accessed April 9, 2015. Three more were published and posted during his term.

<sup>52</sup> On the release of the first *Position Report*, in November 2012, see [http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=70448](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=70448). Subsequent reports were printed and posted on the web in 2013 and 2014.

<sup>53</sup> ADM Greenert’s omission of “empty head nods towards *The [sic] Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*” in his *Sailing Directions* was noticed, publicized, and endorsed by prominent contemporary naval analyst and blogger Raymond Pritchard in his *Information Dissemination* blog “Meet the New Boss, Already Different than the Old Boss,” September 29, 2011, [http://www.informationdissemination.net/2011\\_09\\_01\\_archive.html](http://www.informationdissemination.net/2011_09_01_archive.html).

<sup>54</sup> Mr. Bruce Stubbs comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>55</sup> It also noted that “we will describe ‘How We Fight’ in detail with a book-length project to educate the force and guide future doctrine and operational concepts.” How that book would relate to CS21R was unclear. *How We Fight* would be published, as we will see, just as ADM Greenert left office.

<sup>56</sup> Peter Swartz (CNA) interviews with numerous N51 officers and civilians.

Contemporary conventions of the U.S. defense programming and budgeting system also required a succession of annual Navy “Posture Statements,” glossy “Program Guides,” and other explanatory documents, each typically with a “strategy and policy front end.” These were normally crafted in the OPNAV N00Z and N8 offices, often with outside contractor support. They were important statements of current U.S. Navy policy and strategy thinking, and contained personal views of the CNO. As with the CNO’s *Sailing Directions*, *Navigation Plans*, and *Position Reports*, they were not, however, usually coordinated with the strategy drafters in N51 and their colleagues in the two other seas services.<sup>57</sup> At times this led to delays in the strategy-drafting process, as new elements that surfaced in these documents had to be scrubbed for relevance to the current strategy draft and accommodated in that draft as necessary and appropriate.

In December 2011, at the very start of his term, ADM Greenert published an article in the U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* giving his vision of the Navy 15 years hence. In it he gave pride of place—and some detail—to the concepts of forward presence, cooperation with partners and allies, and a future naval force design that focused on “payloads over platforms” to keep a “warfighting edge.” Just before closing he discussed the increasing importance of mastering the electromagnetic domain.<sup>58</sup> These themes would continue to dominate his thinking for the next four years. To be sure, the article did make reference to “protecting the interconnected systems of trade, information and security,” humanitarian assistance, maritime security, and “shaping the environment to prevent conflict,” but these elements were not highlighted or expanded upon. Nor were the concepts in the article tied to any mention of CS21 or its revision.

CNO articles in *Proceedings* are typically targeted at the U.S. Navy officer corps. ADM Greenert frequently used *Proceedings* as a “bully pulpit” throughout his tour, elaborating on key positions he had taken in his December 2011 article—and not waiting for CS21 to be finalized. In July 2012 he published “Payloads over Platforms: Charting a New Course.”<sup>59</sup> In December 2012 he published “Imminent Domain,” elaborating on the electromagnetic spectrum and cyberspace as a warfighting domain.<sup>60</sup> In 2013, as we will see, he teamed with the Commandant of the Marine

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Admiral Jonathan Greenert, U.S. Navy, “Navy, 2015: Forward Warfighters,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 137 (December 2011), 18-23.

<sup>59</sup> Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, “Payloads over Platforms; Charting a New Course,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 138 (July 2012), 16-23.

<sup>60</sup> Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, “Imminent Domain,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 138 (December 2012), 16-21.

Corps to discuss Navy-Marine Corps integration; and in May 2014 he joined RADM Jamie Foggo in advocating “Forging a Global Network of Navies.”<sup>61</sup>

All of these articles explored and foreshadowed central themes that were contained in the various drafts of CS21R, and that would eventually appear in the final signed version. None of them tied itself to or even mentioned either CS21 or the drafting of its successor.

As ADM Greenert’s views evolved, he laid them out publicly throughout his term in speeches, articles, interviews, congressional testimony, and internally in the decisions he continually made on Navy policy and requirements—seldom with input from, guidance to, or coordination with his N51 staff.<sup>62</sup> Few tied themselves to or even mentioned CS21 or its revision.<sup>63</sup> Successive N51 drafters of CS21R were sometimes hard pressed to keep up with that evolution. Thus they were almost wholly dependent on liaison with the Director of the CNO’s Commander’s Action Group (N00Z) for advice, interpretation, guidance, and access to the CNO. This dependence in effect added yet another bureaucratic layer to their own processes and stretched timelines out further. It was N00Z who played the major role in shaping the CNO’s messages as transmitted through his articles, not N51 and the tri-service drafters of CS21R. N51 officers and civilians charged with writing the strategy often wanted more detailed and substantive rationale from the CNO and N00Z than they received.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert and General James F. Amos, “A New Naval Era,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 139 (June 2013), 16-20; and Admiral Greenert and Rear Admiral James M. Foggo III, “Forging a Global Network of Navies,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 140 (May 2014), 22-29.

<sup>62</sup> For example, at the beginning of his tour, in February 2012, ADM Greenert published an article in February 2012 in *The American Interest* with Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz, discussing how the new national defense strategy incorporated U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy personnel and resources to deter and combat emerging threats. The article was entitled “Air-Sea Battle: Promoting Stability in an Era of Uncertainty.” The Air-Sea Battle Concept will not be mentioned in CS21R, however. Also, just as CS21R was being signed and readied for rollout, ADM Greenert published an article in *Joint Force Quarterly* on the “Navy Perspective on Joint Force Interdependence” (*JFQ* 76, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2015), drafted by the Director of his Commander’s Action Group (OPNAV N00Z), CAPT Michael Studeman. The article did not mention CS21 or CS21R, and the concepts it addressed were not salient ones in those documents. ADM Greenert had also fostered and approved publication by Navy Warfare Development Command (NWDC) of an *Undersea Domain Operating Concept* in September 2013.

<sup>63</sup> An exception was Jonathan Greenert, “Sailing into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Operating Forward, Strengthening Partnerships,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 65 (2d Quarter 2012), which quoted from CS21 in discussing U.S. naval cooperation with partners overseas.

<sup>64</sup> Mr. Bruce Stubbs comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

## International engagement and security cooperation

The leadership of the sea services, especially CNO ADM Greenert (like Admirals Roughead and Mullen before him), were strong proponents of international engagement. During ADM Greenert's first few months in office, his staff and the staffs of his fellow sea service chiefs developed an integrated *Maritime Security Cooperation Policy*, published in January 2012.<sup>65</sup> That document cited and quoted from the 2007 CS21 and the 2010 *Naval Operations Concept* as references, noting in the preface CS21's commitment to preventing as well as winning wars.<sup>66</sup>

More than two years later, in the spring of 2014, the CNO was refining his thinking on strategy and remobilizing his staff. N51 was driving hard for the final push toward publication of CS21R. As part of this resurgence of thought and effort, ADM Greenert signed out an important article in the U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, arguing the necessity for strengthening the bonds of international maritime cooperation. Co-signed by RADM Jamie Foggo, N3/N5B, the eight-page article went into great detail on the evolution of ADM Mullen's "1,000-ship Navy" and "Global Maritime Partnership" (GMP) concepts through ADM Greenert's own concept of a plug-and-play "Global network of navies."<sup>67</sup> The admirals were anxious to get their thinking out in front of the sea services' officer corps and other *Proceedings* readers, and did not want to wait for final publication of CS21R, then beginning its end game.<sup>68</sup>

Likewise, when the CNO met to discuss "global solutions to common maritime challenges" with his fellow global Navy service chiefs at the International Seapower Symposium in September 2014, there was no mention in his remarks—or the

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<sup>65</sup> General James F. Amos, Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, and Admiral Robert J. Papp, *Maritime Security Cooperation Policy: An Integrated Navy-Marine Corps-Coast Guard Approach* (Washington, DC: January 2012)

<sup>66</sup> It also cited three national and DOD documents: The 2010 *National Security Strategy, Guidance for Employment of the Force* (GEF) 2010-2012, and the Secretary of Defense's new *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense*, published at the same time as the *Maritime Security Cooperation Policy*, (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, January 2012).

<sup>67</sup> See Admiral Greenert and Rear Admiral Foggo, "Forging a Global Network of Navies."

<sup>68</sup> CNA Strategic Studies Director and Vice President Dr. Eric Thompson contributed to the conceptualization and drafting of the article as well, at RADM Foggo's request. Dr. Eric Thompson comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

recorded discussion—of CS21’s revision, or its place in his thinking.<sup>69</sup> This was the first International Seapower Symposium in a decade at which CS21, its drafting, or its revision was not formally discussed.

## The CNO and naval forward presence

Naval forward presence had been a basic element of U.S. Navy capstone documents since Captain (CAPT) Stansfield Turner drafted Project SIXTY for CNO ADM Zumwalt in 1970 and later—as a Vice Admiral—named it as one of the four “missions of the navy” in his famous article by that name in 1974.<sup>70</sup> It had endured as a key aspect of U.S. naval thinking—and practice—ever since, and loomed large in the thinking of CNO ADM Jonathan Greenert as he, his staff, and his fellow sea service chiefs created and modified successive drafts of CS21R.

ADM Greenert has been described, even by himself, as “the budget guy” and a “recovering budget officer.” His Washington experience included tours as the Director of the Operations Division, Navy Comptroller; head of the OPNAV Programming Branch (N801); and Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Integration and Resources (OPNAV N8). Indeed, on the OPNAV staff, where his experience in program and budget matters dwarfed that of many current program and budget officers, he was sometimes referred to as the “Super 8.”

But Greenert had also been a member of the CNO’s Strategic Studies Group (SSG) XIII, which had spent a year, from 1993 to 1994, deeply immersed at Newport, RI in studying and analyzing issues of naval forward presence. This was a particularly important time to be focused on this issue area, since it followed on the heels of Secretary of Defense Les Aspin’s “Bottom-Up Review,” which highlighted the significance of forward military presence to national security and allowed the Navy (and the other services) for the first time to use forward presence requirements to justify budget requests.

SSG XIII’s report was entitled *Crisis Response and Influence: The Value of Overseas Military Presence*. Then-Captain Greenert had been a principal conceptualizer and author.<sup>71</sup> Along the way, he had discussed forward presence with senior military

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<sup>69</sup> *Twenty-First International Seapower Symposium: Report of the Proceedings, 16-19 September 2014* (Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, 2015); and Dr. John Hattendorf e-mail to Peter M. Swartz, May 16, 2016.

<sup>70</sup> See John B. Hattendorf, ed., *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1970s*. Newport Paper #30 (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, September 2007).

<sup>71</sup> Chief of Naval Operations Strategic Studies Group XIII, *Crisis Response and Influence: The Value of Overseas Military Presence* (Newport RI: SSG XIII, June 1994). The document and its

commanders around the globe; attended an International Seapower Symposium (ISS) at Newport with naval leaders from dozens of countries, including Russia; and participated in a Navy Cooke Conference of naval planners and strategists drawn from high-echelon staffs from across the Navy.

In his follow-on OPNAV tour, as N801, he sought membership in the Navy Study Group, an after-hours informal forum of mostly active duty naval officers who met monthly to debate and discuss contemporary naval strategy and policy issues. Later, as commander of the U.S. Seventh Fleet, ADM Greenert sought to implement the ideas that he had developed. Said Greenert, “I definitely used what we did on SSG XIII. On SSG XIII we developed the theory. Working with successive Pacific Fleet Commanders [ADM Robert] Natter, [ADM Walter] Doran, and others as we implemented FRP/FDNE, I developed the practice.”<sup>72</sup>

## Presence, engagement, and the CNO

Thus, while he may have been “the budget guy,” ADM Greenert had considerable expertise and a keen personal interest in strategy issues of crisis response, influence and naval forward presence, and in building and maintaining a “global network of navies” through engagement and security cooperation. It should have been of no surprise to anyone that he approved these elements being broken out specially and highlighted in the final draft of CS21R (as they would be, in Section II, “Forward Presence and Partnership”).

## Making the time for N51 and for strategy

ADM Greenert periodically focused on the crafting of CS21R, and on OPNAV N51’s role in drafting it, especially at the very beginning and end of his term. When he did so, things happened (or began to happen). At other times, however, he turned to N00Z and N8 for strategic thinking. Also, of course, he—and the Navy—had many

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concepts competed with work being done simultaneously in OPNAV N51 under the direction of the CNO, ADM Jeremy Boorda, and N51, RADM Philip Dur. RADM Dur’s thinking, approved by the CNO, was published in the U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* (June 1994, pp. 41–44) as “Presence: Forward, Ready, Engaged.” The similarity with the subtitle of CS21R, published more than 20 years later, is obvious, although the authors were not able to ascertain any connection between the two beyond coincidence.

<sup>72</sup> Notes from Peter M. Swartz and Dr. John Hanley interview with ADM Greenert, February 19, 2015. FRP stands for the *Fleet Response Plan*. FDNE refers to the Forward Deployed Naval Force of U.S. Navy ships based far forward in Japan.

other issues to deal with, requiring leadership and hard decisions, which took up much of his time:

- Managing the effects of the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011, sequestration, a U.S. government shutdown, Bipartisan Budget Acts (BBAs), possibility of future BCAs, etc.
- Escalating acquisition costs
- Difficulties in bringing into the fleet two versions of the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) and its three modules, the F-35C Lightning II (carrier variant of the Joint Strike Fighter), Zumwalt-class destroyers, USS *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN-78), and other new systems
- LCS deployments to Singapore
- Congressional concerns regarding the Navy's cruiser modernization plans
- Developing unmanned platforms
- Establishing a funding path for the looming and costly fleet ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) replacement program
- Developing and presenting 30-year shipbuilding plans to Congress
- Implementing the Navy's part in the "rebalance" toward Asia
- Providing forward-deploying ballistic missile defense ships and shore facilities in Europe
- Ensuring Navy forces' readiness to respond to provocations at sea by China, Russia, North Korea and Iran
- Meeting combatant commander demand for Navy forces
- Operationalizing innovative technological and other breakthroughs and recommendations from the Office of Naval Research (ONR), the CNO's Strategic Studies Group (SSG), and the CNO's Rapid Innovation Cell (CRIC)
- Countering Navy cyber hacking incidents
- Operating cost and requirements churn: Dealing with long (and cancelled) deployments, high OPTEMPO and PERSTEMPO, reduced fleet response capacity, and longer-than-anticipated (and curtailed) ship and aircraft maintenance periods

- Revising the Navy’s *Fleet Response Plan* (FRP) to stabilize and improve fleet readiness
- Implementing new operating concepts such as distributed lethality, all-domain access, and the undersea domain operating concept
- Fostering (and correcting misperceptions regarding) the Air-Sea Battle concept
- Developing and implementing programs to eliminate sexual assault and suicide incidents within the service
- Reacting to the Justice Department’s investigation of the Navy’s “Fat Leonard” bribery scandal, and to a mass shooting by an “insider threat” at the Washington Navy Yard
- Achieving equality for gay Navy service members; and integrating women into more combat roles, especially in submarines
- Relieving several Navy commanding officers for cause
- Serving as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- Personally pursuing widespread domestic and international naval engagement, diplomatic, and representational duties.

Some were concerned that the CNO did not always demonstrate sufficient interest and involvement in the process. Without that CNO “buy-in,” they argued, the revised strategy could not succeed.<sup>73</sup>

When the CNO did focus on the strategy, he often gave clear guidance to his staff: For example, he was not comfortable with “Ends, ways, and means” constructs of strategy, and explicitly vetoed their use in his document.<sup>74</sup> Meanwhile, he—and his subordinates—continued to rely on his *Sailing Directions* and its derivative short directives and reports to provide a conceptual basis for his thinking and actions, and for those of the fleet.

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<sup>73</sup> For example, in the view of Bryan McGrath, who had served as lead drafter of the 2007 version of CS21, and periodically interacted with the CNO subsequently, ADM Greenert was insufficiently interested or involved in the revision. Bryan McGrath, “Summary of Remarks for Bryan McGrath at the EMC Chair Symposium,” Naval War College, Newport, RI, March 22, 2016, 3.

<sup>74</sup> Peter M. Swartz interview with Mr. Bruce Stubbs.

## Naval War College

The U.S. Naval War College (NAVWARCOL) in Newport, Rhode Island—especially its Center for Naval Warfare Studies (CNWS)—had played an outsized role in the development of CS21 during the preceding decade.<sup>75</sup> CNWS faculty had indeed been more prominent subsequently in promulgating the tenets of that strategy document than were other elements of the service. As we have seen, the initial TOR had directed that the Naval War College take the lead in the “refresh,” while the revised TOR for the “refresh,” issued shortly thereafter, directed the Naval War College to support OPNAV N3/N5 for this effort and to “leverage subject matter experts” to “include but not be limited to the OPNAV Staff, Academia, the inter-Agency, Non-Governmental Organizations, and non-State Actors.”<sup>76</sup> The college’s academic rigor and prestige within the Navy, and its contacts outside the Navy, were obvious resources to be leveraged.<sup>77</sup>

CNWS convened a tri-service workshop in late November 2011 to kick off the process. They also collaborated with CNA to hold a follow-on workshop at CNA’s headquarters in the Washington, DC area in January 2012, sponsored by OPNAV N51 and responsive to the Naval War College. In late February 2012, the Naval War College convened another workshop to review the draft as it then existed, including inputs from all three services. At the very end of February, it submitted its draft to OPNAV.<sup>78</sup>

In the judgment of the leadership of the Naval War College research faculty involved in the new effort, a full-scale rewrite—or even starting over from scratch—was required if the document were to have conceptual clarity and impact. But as CAPT John M. McLain, the lead N51 action officer involved in the rewrite during the 2011–2013 period, recalled later, OPNAV at that time wanted just a “refresh” (i.e., a “light touch”) by the college, rather than “a cold start with a blank sheet of paper.”<sup>79</sup> The Naval War College faculty took that aboard, but nevertheless believed that some process—longer than a couple of months—was needed to lay a solid foundation for

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<sup>75</sup> For two personal views on the Naval War College’s role in developing CS21, see Haynes, *Toward a New Maritime Strategy*; and CAPT Robert Rubel (Ret.), “The New Maritime Strategy: The Rest of the Story,” *Naval War College Review* (Spring 2008), 69–78.

<sup>76</sup> Dean Thomas Culora comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>77</sup> Authors’ interview with VADM Foggo, July 20, 2015.

<sup>78</sup> John Berry chronology; Dean Thomas Culora.

<sup>79</sup> Authors’ interview with CAPT John McLain, (Ret.), Arlington, VA, May 5, 2015. In CAPT McLain’s view, the Naval War College was in favor of a completely new strategy statement.

the “refresh” as well as to develop a “pedigree” of research documentation that could be leveraged during the inevitable adjudication process at the end game.<sup>80</sup>

The Naval War College principals—like CNO ADM Mullen and DCNO VADM Morgan half a decade earlier—also believed that proper Navy strategy making took considerable time and effort and thus—to be done right—it required resources and money, in addition to time.<sup>81</sup> The successive October 2011 TORs for CS21R called for no more than 12 months’ work to complete and publish the document. By implication, this meant that CNWS had about three months to do its part in analyzing the profound geostrategic changes in the post-Cold War, post-9/11 global environment, since the remaining nine months would be taken up with rewriting, staffing, and production. CNWS recognized that it could therefore do little more than a cursory rewrite, given the time constraints. And that is what it did.<sup>82</sup>

The TORs also noted that “OPNAV will allocate adequate funding to underwrite the cost of this effort. CS21 was funded at \$1M; CS21 ‘refresh’ should be funded accordingly, given it is an update in a shorter duration.”<sup>83</sup> That funding, however, was not forthcoming. When the Naval War College requested \$300,000 from OPNAV to fund war games, administrative support, fellows, and so forth, OPNAV balked.<sup>84</sup> NWC/CNWS funded their CS21R effort out of their regular research budget (which meant that other research projects went unfunded or slipped performe).<sup>85</sup>

The relationship between the Naval War College and OPNAV N51 evolved uneasily. N51 saw itself as directing the effort in accordance with evolving CNO and OPNAV views on the “refresh,” as it understood them, expecting rapid Naval War College responses to directional changes in Washington, speed in strategic conceptualizing, and acceptance of pronouncements on the content of the strategy from the CNO and other OPNAV leaders and staff officers. The Naval War College research leadership sought to replicate the best parts of the measured and deliberate strategy-

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<sup>80</sup> Dean Thomas Culora comment on an earlier draft of this paper. Dean Culora believes that attention to these concerns would have shortened the later review and approval process for CS21R.

<sup>81</sup> On this issue, see Swartz, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategy, Policy, Vision, and Concept Documents*, 62; and Swartz with Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001-2010)*, 159, 161, 190.

<sup>82</sup> Dr. Peter Dombrowski (NWC/CNWS) comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> CAPT John McLain comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>85</sup> Dr. Peter Dombrowski (NWC/CNWS) comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

development processes of half a decade previous, when they had more time, more autonomy, a more collaborative relationship with OPNAV, and more funding.

Ultimately, “we [at the Naval War College] salute and follow orders,” said Professor Peter Dombrowski, chair of the Naval War College’s Strategic Research Department.<sup>86</sup>

## “Classified Annex”

A Naval War College team headed by Warfare Analysis and Research (WAR) department chair Thomas Culora also was initially set up to develop a parallel draft “classified annex,” as tasked in the original TOR, to complement and augment the unclassified “refresh” document draft.<sup>87</sup> The WAR department was a natural home for such activity, given the work of its “Halsey” and “Gravelly” groups.<sup>88</sup> After consultations in Newport and Washington, CNWS decided to have an integrated research and writing team tackle both efforts simultaneously, to ensure that they paralleled each other correctly.<sup>89</sup> When the team provided the unclassified draft to OPNAV, however, they were asked to stop work on the annex—a directive with which the college complied.<sup>90</sup>

## Handover: OPNAV N51 takes the lead

RDML (Sel) Michael E. Smith, the director of OPNAV’s Strategy and Policy Division (N51), was leading the CS21R effort for OPNAV. On February 29, 2012, he received the draft from the Naval War College.<sup>91</sup> In the view of some OPNAV and Marine Corps staff officers, the college had done a good job—on time and within the requirements

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<sup>86</sup> Authors’ interview with Dr. Peter Dombrowski (NWC/CNWS), Arlington, VA, April 20, 2015.

<sup>87</sup> CAPT Culora (Ret.) had contributed to the original CS21 as a member of the CNWS faculty. While on active duty previously, he had served as the Deputy Director of OPNAV’s Strategy and Policy Division, N51B.

<sup>88</sup> Halsey and Gravelly are Advanced Research Groups.

<sup>89</sup> Dr. Peter Dombrowski (NWC/CNWS) comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>90</sup> Dean Thomas Culora comment on earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>91</sup> RDML (Sel) Smith was a surface warfare officer who held a master’s degree in National Security Affairs from the Naval Postgraduate School, and had served as director of the Chairman’s Action Group for two Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and as the executive assistant to the Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet and the Commander, U.S. Pacific Command.

articulated in the terms of reference.<sup>92</sup> However, in the view of at least some senior Navy officials, something more was required. As RDML Smith informed the Naval War College president, the refresh process had now taken an “operational pause.” Smith explained that CS21 would now have to be aligned with the just-issued *Defense Planning Guidance*.<sup>93</sup> Also, the CNO’s *Sailing Directions* had been published, to which CS21R had to cohere (if not conform).<sup>94</sup> These and other developments since the original TOR was issued meant that a more substantial revision rather than a simple “refresh” would be required.<sup>95</sup> Smith also made it clear that the effort would be brought back to OPNAV.<sup>96</sup>

That the Navy’s Director for Strategy and Policy (OPNAV N51) would be the key player in the revision of CS21R would seem to be unremarkable, as would his tasking of his Strategy Branch (N513) officers to do the actual initial coordinating and drafting. Actually, it reflected a conscious decision by the OPNAV hierarchy, from the CNO on down, to exercise the normal staff system and chain of command, rather than sideline it, as had often been done in crafting some Navy capstone documents in the past.<sup>97</sup> CS21 had been drafted by a special cell of officers reporting directly to VADM John Morgan (OPNAV N3/N5), who had hand-selected them, supported chiefly by the Naval War College CNWS. It had not been developed within N51 and N513.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Authors’ telephone interview with RADM James R. Stark, USN (Ret.), June 5, 2015; email from RADM Bruce E. Grooms (N3/N5B) to CNO, “CS 21 Way Ahead,” March 5, 2012; John Berry comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>93</sup> *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense*, 2.

<sup>94</sup> CAPT John McLain comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>95</sup> Ironic, in view of CAPT McLain’s earlier injunction to the Naval War College to apply only a “light touch.”

<sup>96</sup> Email from RDML (Sel) Michael Smith to President of the Naval War College RADM John Christenson, “CS-21 Update,” March 6, 2012.

<sup>97</sup> The Navy’s approach to manning its capstone document drafting has varied through the years. Sometimes the drafters were outside the N3/N5 (formerly OP-06) organization entirely, as had been the case, for example, with CNO ADM Elmo R. Zumwalt’s “Project SIXTY,” which was staffed by a small cell of hand-picked officers reporting directly to the CNO. The original classified versions of the *Maritime Strategy* of the 1980s were drafted within OP-603 (the ancestor to N513), but the 1986 unclassified version was drafted at CNO direction within his OP-00K personal staff section. For the Navy’s record in this regard, see Swartz with Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1970-2010)*, vol. 1, 8.

<sup>98</sup> Or, more accurately, N5SP and N5SC. During his tenure as DCNO, VADM Morgan had changed all the N-codes in his directorate to new letter designations. Upon his retirement, the codes reverted back to numerals.

RDML Smith as N51 had assembled a special team to work within his division on CS21R, headed by CAPT John McLain.<sup>99</sup> CAPT McLain was assigned Lieutenant Commander(LCDR) Thane Clare as a deputy.<sup>100</sup> The team was further augmented by other officers and contractors, and supported by CNA analysts.

## The NSP

In the minds of many of its drafters, CS21R was to inform Navy programming and budgeting decisions. But another document had also been created during the previous decade to do that specifically: The classified *Navy Strategic Plan* (NSP). The first NSP had been drafted in OPNAV N513 in 2006, to inform the development of POM 08. (This had been the only NSP to be published in both classified and unclassified versions.) It had, of course, predated the publication of the original CS21—with which it had been developed in tandem—by more than a year. So too had its successor, the classified *Navy Strategic Plan in Support of POM 10*, signed by the CNO and published a few months before CS21, in September 2007. Subsequent annual NSPs were published through 2010 (for POM 13), all drafted in OPNAV N513.<sup>101</sup>

At CNO ADM Greenert's direction in November 2011, the NSP *in Support of POM 14*—although already drafted by CDR Eric Fino in N513 and internally coordinated by the OPNAV staff—went unsigned. The CNO saw no need for it.<sup>102</sup> This was a period of ongoing flux in national security policy, strategy, and budgets, including the pending release of DOD's new *Defense Strategic Guidance*.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> CAPT McLain had previously been the coordinator and drafter at the development endgame of the 2010 tri-service *Naval Operations Concept*. An experienced helicopter naval aviator, he was also a Naval War College graduate, a former Federal Executive Fellow at CNA, and a former associate member of the CNO Strategic Studies Group in Newport, RI.

<sup>100</sup> LCDR Clare was a surface warfare officer and former commanding officer of a patrol coastal (PC), with previous OPNAV experience, who at the time was both an N513 action officer and a Ph.D. candidate in international relations at Georgetown University, as a Navy Moreau Scholar, writing a dissertation on the political economy of warship exports. He subsequently defended the dissertation successfully and received his doctorate, before heading back to sea duty and eventual at-sea command. LCDR Clare was later described by his boss as “irreplaceable” in the N51 drafting process. CAPT John McLain (Ret.) e-mail to Peter M. Swartz (CNA), April 9, 2016.

<sup>101</sup> On the NSPs, see Swartz with Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001-2010)*.

<sup>102</sup> Mr. Bruce Stubbs comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>103</sup> See Peter M. Swartz with Karin Duggan, *The U.S. Navy in the World (2001-2010): Context for U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts* (Alexandria, VA: CNA, December 2011), 197.

The following year, however, ADM Greenert reversed himself, and directed that an NSP for POM 15 be crafted. He signed and published it in November 2012. Like all preceding and subsequent NSPs, it was drafted in OPNAV N513 (by CAPT Greg Parker). It was produced in tandem with the work then ongoing on CS21R. It was also closely coordinated with OPNAV N81, the OPNAV Assessments Division, and featured well-developed risk guidance.<sup>104</sup> This NSP provided the CNO's OPNAV staff, especially N8, with his strategic priorities for POM 15 development, citing both the January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance and CS21. It also used the "lenses" of his *Sailing Directions'* three tenets: "Warfighting First, Operate Forward, Be Ready."

On the other hand, no NSP for POM 16 was drafted or published in 2013, the year that the DOD *Quadrennial Defense Review* was under way, nor was one published for POM 17.

The utility of the NSP in informing the POM was a constant issue in all these iterations, with many in OPNAV N8—especially N81—regarding it as not timely enough, irrelevant, unnecessary, and an unproductive use of their time to deal with, while successive CNOs kept demanding that N51 produce them.<sup>105</sup>

## N00Z

Since CNO ADM Vern Clark established the Strategic Actions Group (N00Z) in 2002, successive CNOs have relied on this small personal staff of hand-picked, energetic, and bright officers and civilians to look out for their interests in selected areas, in the face of what they regarded as the unfortunately frequently sluggish, parochial, and process-oriented responses of much of the OPNAV staff.<sup>106</sup> CNO ADM Greenert was no exception. Soon after he took office, he installed Mr. Bryan Clark as his Special Assistant and Director of N00Z, supported by his own small staff, now styled as the Commander's Action Group.<sup>107</sup> Undoubtedly with CNO concurrence (and probably at CNO direction), Mr. Clark viewed himself as a principal in the area of

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<sup>104</sup> Mr. Bruce Stubbs comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>105</sup> On the NSPs, see Young, "When Programming Trumps Policy and Plans."

<sup>106</sup> See Peter M. Swartz with Michael C. Markowitz, *Organizing OPNAV (1970-2009)* (Alexandria, VA: CNA, January 2010), 81.

<sup>107</sup> Clark was a retired Navy officer and a graduate of the National War College with extensive Navy staff experience working on critical broad and high-level Navy policy issues for previous Chiefs of Naval Operations and their principal subordinates.

Navy strategy, and he became heavily involved in the development process for CS21R.<sup>108</sup> So too was his successor after 2014, CAPT Michael Studeman.

Mr. Clark was, as we have seen, responsible for overseeing—and often drafting—the CNO’s many policy and strategy-oriented articles, speeches, and testimony. He also served as an intermediary between the N51 drafters and the CNO. “I knew what the CNO wanted,” Mr. Clark said. “That meant they didn’t have to wait for a month for an answer to their questions.”<sup>109</sup> In the experience of CAPT John McLain, the initial N51 lead drafter of CS21R, Mr. Clark was the CNO’s “de facto plenipotentiary.”<sup>110</sup>

Bryan Clark saw himself as an expediter and an accurate transmitter of the CNO’s wishes and decisions. He was often viewed in N51, however, as a time-consuming extra bureaucratic layer and as a “palace guard,” preventing the staff directly responsible for crafting the strategy from dealing directly, face-to-face, with the CNO.<sup>111</sup> Earlier, Naval War College analysts had also chafed at their inability to directly engage with the CNO—or even with N3/N5 VADM Bruce Clingan for that matter—in a short meeting or two.<sup>112</sup>

## Pivoting to Asia: the CNO’s strategy article

In November 2012, the CNO published a major article on the Navy’s strategy on the prestigious and influential website ForeignPolicy.com. Entitled “Sea Change: The Navy Pivots to Asia,” ADM Greenert clearly laid out in some detail the elements of the Navy’s rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region: Deploying more forces to the region; basing more ships and aircraft there; fielding new capabilities focused on Asia-Pacific challenges; and developing international partnerships and the Navy’s own intellectual capital on the region. The CNO ended his article by placing the Asia-Pacific rebalance in its global context, discussing the Navy’s continued operations in Middle Eastern, European, South American, and African waters.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Clark’s biography posted on the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment website in 2016 states that he “led development of Navy strategy” while working for the CNO. <http://csbaonline.org/about/people/bclark/>

<sup>109</sup> Authors’ interview with Bryan Clark, Washington, DC, July 14, 2015.

<sup>110</sup> Dr. William Rosenau Interview with John McLain, May 5, 2015.

<sup>111</sup> Peter M. Swartz interviews with numerous N51 military and civilian staff officers.

<sup>112</sup> Dr. Peter Dombrowski (NWC/CNWS) comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>113</sup> Admiral Jonathan Greenert, “Sea Change: The Navy Pivots to Asia,” ForeignPolicy.com, November 14, 2012, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/11/14/seachange/>

The article had been drafted by Bryan Clark (OPNAV N00Z) and was never coordinated with OPNAV N51, the Navy’s Strategy and Policy Division, while it was drafting the Navy’s strategy.<sup>114</sup> The rebalance of U.S. foreign and defense policy to the Asia-Pacific, however, was one topic in which the division—and especially the division director, RDML Michael Smith—had particular expertise and experience.<sup>115</sup>

## CNA

During these early phases of CS21R development, CNA had been requested to support the “refresh,” working to assist the Naval War College and OPNAV. In the view of N513, “CNA had background, perspective, and experience on Navy strategic matters, and strong connections with OPNAV, the Naval War College, and the naval strategist cognoscenti.”<sup>116</sup>

CNA analysts participated in the kickoff Naval War College workshop in Newport, Rhode Island in November 2011.<sup>117</sup> In January 2012, CNA’s Strategic Studies division conceptualized, organized, and ran a classified geostrategic workshop, sponsored by OPNAV N51 and requested by the Naval War College/CNWS (both of which it had worked closely with in the past). The workshop was held at CNA headquarters, at the time in Alexandria, Virginia. Panelists included leading subject-matter experts in national security and global and regional affairs. The audience was composed largely of naval officers and civilians with roles in the CS21R effort from the Naval War College and OPNAV.<sup>118</sup>

CNA analysts also helped write and critique drafts of CS21R, and shared earlier CNA strategy-development findings with N51 officers.<sup>119</sup> Later, in 2013, a CNA senior fellow, RADM James R. Stark (Ret.), served as a part-time member of the N51 drafting team at the Pentagon.<sup>120</sup> CNA also arranged for respected British naval strategy

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<sup>114</sup> Mr. Bruce Stubbs comment on a previous draft of this paper.

<sup>115</sup> In his previous tour, RDML Smith had served as executive assistant to the Commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, and Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command.

<sup>116</sup> John McLain comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>117</sup> CNA leadership and analyst support was provided chiefly by Strategic Studies Director and Vice President Dr. Eric Thompson, and by Peter M. Swartz and other analysts.

<sup>118</sup> CNA strategy analyst Elbridge Colby led the CNA team that conceptualized and ran the conference, assisted by Christopher Steinitz.

<sup>119</sup> Especially Swartz, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategy, Policy, Vision and Concept Documents*.

<sup>120</sup> RADM Stark held a Ph.D. in international relations from Tufts University’s Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and was a former president of the Naval War College. He had also served on the National Security Council staff and in OPNAV (OP-603) (progenitor of N513), where he

expert Dr. Geoffrey Till to meet with ADM Smith and his staff, and provide them with his views on CS21. From January 2013 to November 2014, a leading CNA strategic analyst, Mr. Jed Snyder, conducted a series of classified studies for ADM Smith, at his direction, developing a long-term implementation rationale and plan to support the U.S. Navy's contribution to the national Asia-Pacific rebalancing strategy—the centerpiece of contemporary and anticipated U.S. Navy strategy.

## Multi-service collaboration

Those involved in what was now being termed the CS21 “revision” considered their effort to be a multiservice one—a reflection of the thinking and interests of the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Coast Guard, as well as the U.S. Navy. (This had also been the case with the 2007 strategy statement). Thus the revision would involve collaboration among “three different organizations, each with unique service cultures.”<sup>121</sup>

At first, the Navy intended to do most of its own “refreshing,” but this position evolved: The first two TORs noted that, “Since this is a ‘refresh’ and not a rewrite, there is no obvious need for an extensive collaborative approach with USMC and USCG. A consultative approach is more appropriate, but needed.”<sup>122</sup> Early in October 2011, the CNO sent a formal memorandum to the Commandants of the other sea services announcing the “refresh” effort. The memorandum advised that, “My staff and I will consult with you and your staffs through this process.”<sup>123</sup> The other services predictably pushed back on being relegated solely to a “consultative” role. Consequently, the third Navy TOR (May 2012) for what was now termed a “revision” announced that “CS21 Revision will be fully and openly coordinated with USMC and USCG staff counterparts,” codifying what had in fact already been the case for months.<sup>124</sup> Accordingly, a tri-service Working Group was created, within which officers and civilians from all three services participated.

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had contributed to the formulation and dissemination of the Navy's maritime strategy of the 1980s.

<sup>121</sup> CDR Dana Reid, USCG characterization in commenting on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>122</sup> *Terms of Reference and Revised Terms of Reference*.

<sup>123</sup> Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, Memorandum for Commandant of the Marine Corps, Commandant of the Coast Guard. Subj: “Refresh of A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower, CS21” (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations, October 3, 2011). From John Berry files, MCCDC/CD&I, Quantico VA

<sup>124</sup> *Terms of Reference for Revision of “A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower,”* document undated but PDF. File dated May 18, 2012. From N51B files.

“The Navy would lead the charge and did the bulk of the administration,” recalled one Coast Guard officer who joined the effort in 2014, “but I don’t think anyone considered it just a Navy document.”<sup>125</sup> However, according to McLain, there were some “basic difficulties in bridging and binding three distinct services and bringing them to common cause in a document such as CS21R.”<sup>126</sup> “We had three new service chiefs . . . and they had individually articulated visions for their services that were not necessarily convergent.”<sup>127</sup>

As CAPT McLain described one aspect of the drafting process, from his point of view:

The tri-service writing team would meet every few weeks and hammer out a new draft. That draft would be conditional based on our bosses’ review. In my case, Mr. Stubbs and RDML Smith often vigorously objected to USMC and USCG adds and changes at the Working Group level. They might turn and revise this draft a few times before I could take it back to the Working Group again. On not every occasion the other services would have had a chance to chop the document through their bosses.<sup>128</sup>

## The Navy and the Marine Corps

Marine Corps civilians Douglas King and John Berry were assigned to the project in 2011 and would provide continuity through the document’s final rollout in March 2015.<sup>129</sup> They had previously worked effectively with CAPT John McLain—the initial Navy lead drafter—in crafting and finalizing the tri-service *Naval Operations Concept 2010*.<sup>130</sup> The three services were meant to “collaborate,” said Berry.<sup>131</sup> In Berry’s view,

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<sup>125</sup> Dr. William Rosenau interview with CDR Dana Reid, USCG, Arlington, VA, May 5, 2015. According to a Marine Corps participant, action officers from all three services met two or three times a month during 2012 and 2013, “massaging and working drafts. Sometimes it was a bit of a rush, not much dialogue.” Dr. William Rosenau interview with John Berry, Marine Corps Base Quantico, February 2, 2015.

<sup>126</sup> CAPT John McLain interview, May 5, 2015.

<sup>127</sup> CAPT John McLain comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Both were retired U.S. Marine Corps officers with extensive experience in crafting naval and Marine Corps concepts, strategies and policies, including the *Naval Operations Concept* (2006) (Washington, DC: USN and USMC, 2006), [https://cno.ahf.nmci.navy.mil/n8/webdoc01.nsf/F72D48F51F30998B862575920069EA2D/\\$File/Naval%20Operations%20Concept%202006.pdf](https://cno.ahf.nmci.navy.mil/n8/webdoc01.nsf/F72D48F51F30998B862575920069EA2D/$File/Naval%20Operations%20Concept%202006.pdf); the *Naval Operations Concept* (2010); and the original 2007 version of CS21.

<sup>130</sup> “[We] had a great personal and professional relationship. We would need it! They were smart and reasonable men, and we recognized when we were disagreeing, and when we were

however, the revision project was “not always as fully collaborative as the 2007 project had been. Episodically, some Marine participants were concerned that uncoordinated changes would appear in (already) agreed-upon drafts. This may have been due to frequent turnover among Navy members of the team, with newly assigned personnel being unaware of the discussions underpinning existing text or the group dynamics associated with forging consensus among the services.”<sup>132</sup> Over the course of the rewriting, various disputes emerged between the Navy and Marine Corps over terminology and what McClain termed “service-distinct operational concepts,” such as whether or not amphibious warfare should be considered a form of power projection.<sup>133</sup>

More effective Navy-Marine Corps relationships and collaboration were, however, a high priority in the minds of the chiefs of both services. Without waiting for eventual promulgation of CS21R, in 2013 they went ahead and published in *Proceedings* “A New Naval Era”—a detailed statement regarding their vision for the evolution of those relationships, including many concepts then in play by the tri-service drafting team for CS21R. (“A New Naval Era” cited some earlier Navy-Marine Corps capstone documents, but never mentioned CS21).<sup>134</sup>

Also, while CS21R was under development as a tri-service document, the Marine Corps was also developing its own vision of its future as a service, as a tandem document (also under the oversight of Doug King and with writing support from John Berry). That effort would yield *Expeditionary Force 21*, identified by an acronym—“EF 21”—specifically selected to show linkage to “CS21.” The Marine Corps assigned the same officers and civilians to the teams working on both documents, to ensure nesting of content. But as CS21R became more and more delayed, the Marines decided they could not wait to publish their own document, for their own purposes. Accordingly, EF 21 was signed and published by Commandant of the Marine Corps

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articulating the positions of our services.” CAPT John McLain comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>131</sup> Dr. William Rosenau interview with John Berry, February 2, 2015.

<sup>132</sup> John Berry comment on earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>133</sup> Dr. William Rosenau interview with John McLain, May 5, 2015. For concomitant internal U.S. Marine Corps policy debates, decisions and implementation, see LtCol Brian Bruggeman and Ben FitzGerald, *Crisis Response: Institutional Innovation in the United States Marine Corps* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, November 2015).

<sup>134</sup> Admiral Greenert and General Amos, “A New Naval Era.”

Gen James Amos in March 2014, a year before CS21R was finally signed and released by his successor and the two other sea service chiefs.<sup>135</sup>

## The Navy and the Coast Guard

For the Coast Guard, CS21 had afforded them an opportunity to reaffirm the service's commitment to its Title 10 mission and maintain interoperability with the Navy and Marine Corps. They were well satisfied with the tone and balance of that document, and were initially wary of its revision. They were especially wary of placing greater emphasis on warfighting. Initial relationships between the OPNAV N51 staff and the Coast Guard headquarters CG5 staff on the revision were chilly, but definitely warmed over time.<sup>136</sup>

Coast Guard participants in the revision worked to link the responsibilities articulated in the strategy with the recapitalization of the Coast Guard fleet—a key service priority. In addition, the Coast Guard wanted the strategy to reflect and support the service's long-term cooperative efforts with countries around the world to promote maritime security.<sup>137</sup> The Coast Guard assigned officers to the drafting process early on, but their contingent would face turnover challenges similar to those of their Navy colleagues as the process's timelines lengthened.

Like the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard had its own internal requirement for service-specific strategic-level documents, and—also like the Marine Corps—the Coast Guard found that it could not wait for the eventual publication of CS21R. In February 2013, Coast Guard Commandant ADM Papp and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) administrator published their own *Cooperative Maritime Strategy*.<sup>138</sup> Three months later, ADM Papp published his service's *Arctic Strategy*, and the following year his successor as Commandant, ADM Paul Zukunft, signed out the Coast Guard's *Western Hemisphere Strategy*.<sup>139</sup> None of these documents

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<sup>135</sup> John Berry comment on earlier draft of this paper. See also General James E. Amos, *Expeditionary Force 21: Forward and Ready: Now and in the Future* (Washington, DC: Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, March 4, 2014). [http://www.mccdc.marines.mil/Portals/172/Docs/MCCDC/EF21/EF21\\_USMC\\_Capstone\\_Concept.pdf](http://www.mccdc.marines.mil/Portals/172/Docs/MCCDC/EF21/EF21_USMC_Capstone_Concept.pdf).

<sup>136</sup> John McLain comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>137</sup> CDR Dana Reid interview, May 5, 2015.

<sup>138</sup> Admiral Robert J. Papp, Jr. and Dr. Jane Lubchenco, *Cooperative Maritime Strategy* (Washington, DC: United States Coast Guard and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, February 2013).

<sup>139</sup> Admiral Robert Papp, *United States Coast Guard Arctic Strategy* (Washington, DC: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, May 2013); and Admiral Paul Zukunft, *United States Coast Guard Western Hemisphere Strategy* (Washington, DC: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, September 2014).

mentioned either the 2007 CS21—presumably still in force—or the drafting of its successor.

VADM Foggo recalled that “the greatest criticism of the 2007 strategy had been that it didn’t name names.”<sup>140</sup> For the Coast Guard, however, identifying specific countries like China, and employing terms like “warfighting” was problematical. Service representatives expressed early on in the drafting process their concern that “naming names” and martial language could jeopardize the service’s security cooperation activities with other nations. One Coast Guard officer explained that the service “has productive and cooperative relations with both China and Russia and we pushed back against [naming] either.”<sup>141</sup>

## Sequestration, the QDR, and delay

Throughout, deadlines were routinely set and missed. In his October 2011 memorandum to the Commandants of the other sea services, the CNO announced that “Our goal is to complete the refresh by next May.”<sup>142</sup> The January 2012 ‘Revised’ Navy TOR for the ‘refresh’ noted that the, “goal would be to unveil the CS21 ‘refresh’ at the NWC Current Strategy Forum in May 2012.”<sup>143</sup> The May 2012 Navy TOR, however, for what was now termed a “revision,” targeted “Service Chief approval by late August 2012.”<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> VADM James Foggo interview, July 20, 2015. For the internal debate leading up to that earlier decision, see Lieutenant John Ennis USNR, “Inside the New Maritime Strategy,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 135 (December 2009), 71.

<sup>141</sup> Authors’ telephone interview with LCDR Jim Jarnac, USCG, May 21, 2015. In the view of the Coast Guard, the international relationships that the service had built were based on law enforcement and humanitarian mission sets as well as the Coast Guard’s small size relative to that of the U.S. Navy. In the words of a Coast Guard spokesman, this made the service “uniquely equipped to deal with nations that normally would not work with the U.S. on military issues. In addition, most of the world’s navies match the Coast Guard in terms of size and mission sets, making us an ideal role model and partner.” Quoted in John C. Marcario, “Filling the Gaps: Coast Guard, Navy, Marine Corps Cooperation is Key to Providing a Layered Security Force,” *Seapower* (October 2015), 45.

<sup>142</sup> Admiral Greenert, Memorandum for Commandant of the Marine Corps, Commandant of the Coast Guard. Subj: “*Refresh of A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower, CS21.*”

<sup>143</sup> *Revised Terms of Reference for Refresh of “A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower”* document undated but PDF file dated Jan 15, 2012.

<sup>144</sup> *Terms of Reference for Revision of “A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower,”* document n.d., but PDF file dated May 18, 2012.

Numerous other internal Navy memorandums and working papers laid out ambitious detailed timelines to achieve the ever-receding deadlines. Examination of internal Navy communications and interviews with key participants suggest that expectations were always that the effort was short term.<sup>145</sup> In fact, it would be nearly four years before CS21R was published.

Some of the factors contributing to the delays were external to OPNAV. When the initial TOR was first drafted, the Navy had at hand a fairly up-to-date national strategy document to use for guidance and reference: The *National Security Strategy* signed out by President Obama a year and a half before.<sup>146</sup> There was also authoritative guidance in the *National Military Strategy*, signed out by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff ADM Michael Mullen in February 2011.<sup>147</sup> Meanwhile, however, a new Secretary of Defense strategy document was being crafted, and ADM Mullen was succeeded as Chairman by General (GEN) Martin Dempsey in the fall of 2011, around the same time that ADM Greenert became CNO. The new CNO and his staff didn't want to get out in front of the new Chairman, nor the DOD strategy effort, so they slipped their timelines until a formal new defense strategy could be signed and published. In January 2012, the new *Defense Strategic Guidance* document was promulgated, signed by both the President and then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta.<sup>148</sup>

Work moved forward on CS21R, under N51's lead, but now acrimonious budget debates between and within the executive and legislative branches engendered enormous uncertainties in U.S. defense planning. These uncertainties contributed to more delays.

Secretary Panetta was relieved as Secretary of Defense by Senator Chuck Hagel in February 2013, causing some to question the validity of the *Defense Strategic*

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<sup>145</sup> For example, an April 2012 draft revision of the TOR proposed a three-month development period ending in June of that year, followed by a one-month tri-service staffing period, with release in August. N51, "Outline of New Terms of Reference (TOR) to Craft the Revision of the Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower (CS21)," n.d. [April 19, 2012], 7.

<sup>146</sup> President Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2010). [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/national\\_security\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf).

<sup>147</sup> Admiral M.G. Mullen, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2011: Redefining America's Military Leadership* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, February 8, 2011), [https://www.army.mil/e2/rv5\\_downloads/info/references/NMS\\_Feb2011.pdf](https://www.army.mil/e2/rv5_downloads/info/references/NMS_Feb2011.pdf).

<sup>148</sup> Barack Obama and Leon Panetta, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, January 2012), [http://archive.defense.gov/news/Defense\\_Strategic\\_Guidance.pdf](http://archive.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf).

*Guidance* as an authoritative reference. More importantly, the absence of legislation to control the federal budget deficit triggered “sequestration” on March 1, 2013. The sequester imposed significant cuts in defense and non-defense spending, and preparing for these reductions consumed the attention of senior decision-makers across the U.S. government, including the CNO and OPNAV.<sup>149</sup>

During this time, the *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR), a legislatively-mandated review of DOD strategies, policies, and priorities, was also underway, and the CNO and other senior leaders were now concerned that the CS21R not “get out ahead” of the QDR.<sup>150</sup> It would take another year for the QDR to be signed out. The Navy contributed to the drafting of the QDR through a special cell set up on the OPNAV staff, headed by RADM Kevin “Kid” Donegan. RADM Donegan’s own past staff experience in OPNAV N3/N5 and its strategy-crafting function was extensive and deep, but the current drafters of CS21 did not participate in his new QDR team.<sup>151</sup>

Indeed, sequencing, timing, and alignment were persistent challenges for those responsible for revising CS21. In addition to strengthening the powers of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), and promoting “jointness” more generally across the armed forces, the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 had reduced service chief authorities.<sup>152</sup> Navy strategy could not be a “stand-alone” strategy. Rather, it had to be positioned within the broader context of higher-level strategic documents like the NSS, *Defense Strategic Guidance* (DSG), and the QDR—documents that often only barely aligned with one another, and introduced distinct taxonomies in which naval concepts often had trouble fitting.<sup>153</sup> Any revised seapower strategy would have to incorporate the concepts articulated in such documents—and be

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<sup>149</sup> For more on the impact of sequestration on DOD, see U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Sequestration: Observations on the Department of Defense’s Approach in Fiscal Year 2013* (Washington, DC: GAO, November 7, 2013), <http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/658913.pdf>, accessed September 16, 2015.

<sup>150</sup> Authors’ interview with Mr. Bruce Stubbs, February 5, 2015.

<sup>151</sup> Peter M. Swartz interview with Mr. Bruce Stubbs.

<sup>152</sup> For an argument in favor of service-developed strategies, see Bryan McGrath, “Revisiting the Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces” (testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee) (Washington, DC: Hudson Institute, November 5, 2015). On Goldwater-Nichols generally, and the Navy’s opposition to passage of the act, see James R. Locher III, *Victory on the Potomac: The Goldwater-Nichols Act Unifies the Pentagon* (College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 2004); and Gary Anderson, “Face It, Goldwater-Nichols Hasn’t Worked,” *ForeignPolicy.com*, December 27, 2012, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/12/27/face-it-goldwater-nichols-hasnt-worked/>, accessed August 23, 2015.

<sup>153</sup> Paraphrase of a CAPT John McLain comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

promulgated neither too early nor too late in those documents' own production cycles.<sup>154</sup>

## Not the only game in town

There were other considerations: N51 in particular had responsibility for drafting or contributing to numerous documents that had some relationship to strategy—if not to CS21R. Many of these were national, defense, joint or Navy documents that needed to be pursued on their own timelines, even if ideally they all should have waited for the three sea services to have promulgated a revised CS21 first.<sup>155</sup> Those N51 civilians and officers charged with ensuring that Navy views were incorporated in national-level documents became acutely aware of how irrelevant the drafting of CS21R was considered by the wider defense policy and strategy community on the NSC staff, in OSD, and on the Joint and Combatant Command staffs.<sup>156</sup>

A good example was the *U.S. Navy Arctic Roadmap*, drafted in 2013 and published in February 2014 to update a previous Navy document published in 2009.<sup>157</sup> The update needed to be fashioned speedily in response to the promulgation of a May 2013 White House *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* and a November 2013 *Department of Defense Arctic Strategy*. OPNAV N51's leadership and staff had major responsibilities in conceptualizing the strategic basis for the *Roadmap*.

In 2014 the Navy also published a *Naval Aviation Vision 2014-2025*; and in January 2015, senior leaders of the Department of the Navy and its two services signed out a *Naval Science and Technology Strategy*, developed in 2014.

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<sup>154</sup> This contrasted with the approach taken by the drafters of the original 2007 CS21, who were trying to get ahead of current policy and to influence—and, indeed, to lead—the new national strategy of the next administration, whichever party and candidate would win the 2008 presidential election. See Swartz with Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001-2010)*, 145.

<sup>155</sup> National-level documents that N51 contributed to for the Navy included the *National Security Strategy* (NSS), the *Guidance for Employment of the Force* (GEF), the *Comprehensive Joint Assessment* (CJA), the *Chairman's Risk Assessment* (CRA), and others.

<sup>156</sup> Rob Marshall comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>157</sup> Admiral Jonathan Greenert, *U.S. Navy Arctic Roadmap: 2014-2030* (Washington, DC: Navy Task Force Climate Change, February 2014).

## RDML Smith's articles

As the Navy's Director for Strategy and Policy (N51), RDML Michael Smith believed he had a role—indeed a duty—to speak out on Navy strategic issues, even absent the publication of a final CS21R. He sought to guide and lead the strategic debate within the Navy on issues with which he had become well familiar, in the course of revising CS21.

Accordingly, in 2013, after serving almost two years in the job and preparing to depart for a new assignment, he published two successive articles on strategic subjects in the U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*: On strategic cooperation and the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific—key elements in the revision of CS21R.<sup>158</sup> In the latter article, he made his argument using the “ends, ways, and means” construct that he advocated for organizing the ideas in CS21R (but with which the CNO was not enamored). His articles—as intended—triggered “comment and discussion” responses in subsequent *Proceedings* issues.

The articles were crafted for RDML Smith by the Navy CS21R writing team—CAPT John McLain, LCDR Thane Clare, LT Jennie Stone, RADM James Stark (Ret.). RDML Smith and the team sought to “test the waters” for concepts that they thought would appear in the final document. They did so with the CNO's tacit blessing.<sup>159</sup>

## Staff turnover and revising the “refresh”

In the judgment of many participants, the turnover of key personnel, while inevitable and driven by reasons that had little to do with strategy formulation, also helped to slow down the CS21R process.

While the rewriting was underway, both the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard changed commandants.<sup>160</sup> The lead Marine Corps drafters—Douglas King and John Berry—stayed in place from beginning to end, however, providing needed continuity to the overall process and also enabling achievement of Marine Corps objectives for the document. Marines who supported them did turn over as the timelines

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<sup>158</sup> Rear Admiral Michael E. Smith, “Strategic Cooperation: Everybody Wins,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* (March 2013), 56-61; and “Roadmap to the Rebalance,” (August 2013), 45-49.

<sup>159</sup> John McLain comment on an earlier version of this draft.

<sup>160</sup> ADM Paul Zukunft relieved ADM Robert J. Papp as Commandant of the Coast Guard in May 2014. Gen Joseph F. Dunford, Jr. relieved Gen James F. Amos as Commandant of the Marine Corps in October 2014. He was relieved in turn by Gen Robert B. Neller in September 2015, the same month that ADM Richardson relieved ADM Greenert as CNO.

lengthened, however, as did a succession of U.S. Coast Guard officers charged with making their service's contribution (see Appendix A).

Within OPNAV, however, the personnel churn was extensive. In February 2012 VADM Bruce Clingan was relieved by VADM Mark Fox as the cognizant Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (N3/N5).<sup>161</sup> VADM Fox was relieved a year and a half later by VADM Michele Howard, who was in turn relieved by RADM Kevin "Kid" Donegan the following year.<sup>162</sup> Turnover among Assistant DCNOs (N3/N5B) was equally rapid: RADM Bruce Grooms was followed by RADM Peter Gumataotao in 2013, who was relieved by RADM Foggo later the same year.<sup>163</sup> RADM Foggo was relieved by RADM Jeffrey Harley in October 2014.

In August 2013, RDML William C. McQuilkin replaced RDML Smith as director of N51.<sup>164</sup> Mainstays of the rewriting effort, including CAPT McClain and LCDR Clare, also rotated out to new assignments.<sup>165</sup> Old working partnerships were necessarily disrupted.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> VADM Clingan, a naval aviator, had previous policy experience on the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) staff and had commanded the U.S. Sixth Fleet. Upon leaving N3/N5, he received a fourth star and was assigned as Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa. VADM Fox, also a naval aviator, had served in the Navy Office of Legislative Affairs, on the SHAPE staff, and had just recently commanded U.S. Naval Forces, Central Command.

<sup>162</sup> VADM Howard had graduated from the Army Command and General Staff College and been previously assigned as senior military assistant to the Secretary of the Navy and Chief of Staff to the Director for Strategic Plans and Policy, J-5. She went on to receive a fourth star and was appointed Vice Chief of Naval Operations. RADM Donegan had been a participant in the creation of at least two previous Navy capstone documents: *From the Sea* and the 2007 *Cooperative Strategy*. As a flag officer, he had already served as Director of the Strategy and Policy Division (N51) and the Naval Warfare Integration Division, and had directed the U.S. Navy's participation in a *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR). He was a graduate of the USAF Air Command and Staff College and the Joint Forces Staff College, and had completed the Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education program in National and International Security. Upon leaving N3/N5, he received a third star and was assigned as Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Central Command.

<sup>163</sup> RADM Grooms was a submariner with a master's degree from the Naval War College who had also attended Stanford University as a National Security Affairs Fellow. He had served as the senior military assistant to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and as Vice Director of the Joint Staff. RADM Gumataotao was a surface warfare officer and Naval War College graduate with previous assignments as an analyst in the Strategic Studies Division at CNA and in the Navy's Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA). As a flag officer, he had served as Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea.

<sup>164</sup> RDML Smith moved on to carrier strike group command.

<sup>165</sup> RDML McQuilkin was a surface warfare officer who had served previously in N51 as head of the policy branch (N512). He had also served as Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea, and held

Continuity was provided by the CNO himself, and by the civilian Deputy Director of the Strategy and Policy Division, Mr. Bruce Stubbs (N51B).<sup>167</sup> A certain measure of continuity was also provided by the reassignment of RADM Foggo from Director of the OPNAV Analysis Division (N81) to Assistant Deputy Director for Operations, Plans and Strategy (OPNAV N3/N5B), with a mandate from the CNO and DCNO VADM Howard (N3/N5) to focus on finishing the revision of the strategy.<sup>168</sup>

CDR Tom Williams, just reported in from the National War College, became the new N513 strategy action officer and lead CS21 revision drafter in July 2013, relieving CAPT McLain.<sup>169</sup> Now-Captain Williams recalled of his year as lead drafter:

- I started my stewardship of CS21R in July 2013 after I graduated from National War College and turned it over to [CAPTs] [Frank] “Tank” Michael and Kevin Parker in April 2014 as I headed back to sea. If you remember, under Mike Smith and John McLain, CS21 was an independent effort. I started under Mike as he transitioned out to his CSG Command. When, (RDML) Bill McQuilkin came in, I fell under Frank Michael when we started a major redrafting effort. I took the draft I received from John through several revisions/iterations, as we examined how to deal with the changing domestic and foreign strategic context (sequester, QDR, Russia, ISIL).
- Perhaps the best way to describe my time is as follows: When I arrived, the draft that John and [LCDR] Thane Clare had written was going out for “quick three- and four-star comment,” with a planned release of fall 2013. When I left in the spring of 2014, we had redrafted it and it was again going back out for “three-star comment” with a planned release date of fall 2014. With a realization that with the Commandants of the Coast Guard and Marine Corps turning over in the summer and fall of 2014, it wasn’t likely going happen quickly at the tri-service level.

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advanced degrees from the Naval Postgraduate School and the Army Command and General Staff College.

<sup>166</sup> See Appendix A for details on the sequence of players.

<sup>167</sup> Mr. Stubbs was a retired U.S. Coast Guard officer with U.S. Navy operational experience. He was a Naval War College graduate, had served on the Coast Guard headquarters staff, and as a civilian consultant had contributed to several national and Coast Guard strategy documents. His previous Navy civilian assignment had been as director for Maritime Domain Awareness.

<sup>168</sup> Recall that RADM Foggo had earlier served on ADM Greenert’s 2011 CNO transition team, and had drafted the original TORs for the CS21 “refresh.”

<sup>169</sup> CDR Williams was a Cornell University graduate, surface warfare officer, and former White House Fellow with extensive previous experience on the OPNAV and Joint Staffs and a master’s degree from Johns Hopkins University’s Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS).

- I was pleasantly surprised to see the draft that I left behind was mostly intact in structure, content and tone, when finally published in March 2015. The largest difference was the addition of "all domain access" as the top "essential function."<sup>170</sup>

After only a year in the job, CDR Williams was relieved as lead drafter by his boss, CAPT Frank "Tank" Michael (N513).<sup>171</sup>

## Building the final team

By the fall of 2013, the strategy document had already been under development for more than two years, exceeding the drafting time of any of its three dozen predecessor capstone documents, stretching back more than four decades.<sup>172</sup> The QDR, the budget crisis, Washington Navy Yard shooting, the Syrian War, and a pending visit by the Chinese CNO all distracted the CNO and his staff and contributed to yet further delay.<sup>173</sup> The CNO had reassigned RADM Jamie Foggo as N3/N5B. RADM Foggo was personally committed to the project, as was VADM Michele Howard, who had relieved as N3/N5 a month earlier.

A month later, VADM Howard directed that RDML William McQuilkin be brought back from Korea to relieve RDML Smith as Director for Strategy and Policy (N51).<sup>174</sup> RDML McQuilkin was well-familiar with N51 and the workings of OPNAV, having just served there as the policy branch head (N512) until September 2011, when he was promoted to RADM and departed for Korea (just as ADM Greenert was reporting in to the Pentagon as CNO). Mr. Bruce Stubbs continued as SES Deputy Director (N51B), providing continuity.

CDR Tom Williams had relieved CAPT McLain as primary CS21R drafter earlier in the summer, but by the spring of 2014, RDML McQuilkin (OPNAV N51) and Captain Michael (N513) had assumed direct lead drafting responsibility within OPNAV for coordination with Marine and Coast Guard colleagues for producing the document.

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<sup>170</sup> CAPT Thomas Williams e-mail to Peter M. Swartz, April 9, 2016.

<sup>171</sup> CAPT Michael was a helicopter aviator who had commanded an amphibious assault ship (LHD). He had also served on the Joint Staff and on the CNO's Strategic Studies Group (SSG), generating innovative naval warfare concepts.

<sup>172</sup> On when in their tours CNOs—from ADM Zumwalt on—had signed and published their capstone documents, see Swartz with Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1970-2010)*, vol. I, p. 15.

<sup>173</sup> John Berry chronology, citing CDR Thomas Williams.

<sup>174</sup> RDML McQuilkin was Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Korea.

They were supported by Mr. Bruce Stubbs, RDML McQuilkin's deputy, and CAPT Kevin Parker (N513).<sup>175</sup> They would retain that responsibility through signature and publication of the final document. RDML McQuilkin averred—from the day he reported on board as N51 to the day CS21R was rolled out—that writing and publishing that document was his (and his entire Division's) most important responsibility.

VADM Howard would be relieved by RADM Kevin Donegan, and RADM Foggo by RADM Jeffrey Harley, and both were as dedicated to getting CS21R out the door as their predecessors had been. In the CNO's Commander's Action Group (CAG) (N00Z), Mr. Bryan Clark retired from government service in the fall of 2013, relieved briefly by Mr. Jud von Kolnitz and in January 2014 by CAPT Michael Studeman, a long-time assistant and advisor to ADM Greenert.<sup>176</sup> (Clark therefore would not be in the Navy during the document's final roll-out and promulgation, and would not be able to act as an internal Navy advocate for the document and its ideas once it was published, despite his important role in determining its contents.)

The *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR) report was finally published in March 2014, breaking the logjam of waiting for the latest in national defense guidance.<sup>177</sup> Nevertheless, and despite the quality and stability of the final team, it would take yet another year until the final CS21R document would be rolled out. Furthermore, publication of the QDR report spawned yet another complex issue to be debated, discussed and adjudicated: Which aspects of the QDR report should be referenced in CS21R, and which not?<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> In August 2014, CAPT William Combes relieved CAPT Michael of his duties as Strategy Branch head (N513), so that he could concentrate full-time on drafting and shepherding CS21R. Combes was a submarine officer who had been a U.S. Navy Hudson Fellow at St. Antony's College, Oxford University. He retired from the Navy in August 2015, just five months after the roll-out of CS21R.

<sup>176</sup> CAPT Studeman, a Navy intelligence officer, had earlier served CNO ADM Greenert as a special assistant when he had been Vice Chief of Naval Operations, and as director of his Commander's Action Group when he had been Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command. He also had had assignments as a White House Fellow and as OPNAV's strategic issues lead during a DOD Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR).

<sup>177</sup> Chuck Hagel, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, March 4, 2014).

<sup>178</sup> The QDR report, for example, included a "Chairman's Assessment" that used an "ends, ways, means" construct, and listed 12 joint military missions as "ways" (vice the 10 missions in the 2012 *Defense Strategic Guidance* and the seven naval missions that had been derived from them for CS21R, at the CNO's direction).

## 2014: Driving toward the endgame

### VADM Howard and “naming names”

As new drafts emerged, the service’s senior leadership provided additional nuance and guidance. Drafts were periodically vetted widely among the Navy’s flag officers, and the CNO saw and commented on several of them personally. VADM Michelle Howard, OPNAV N3/N5 in 2013 and 2014 (and later the Vice Chief of Naval Operations (VCNO)), insisted that the goal of the new strategy was to make explicit the “overarching and enduring aspects of seapower.”<sup>179</sup>

Drafters had long grappled with the question of how to address international audiences.<sup>180</sup> VADM Howard insisted that the document be written clearly and concisely for multiple audiences at home and abroad. Partners and allies who were left out might feel slighted.<sup>181</sup> Naming China and other potential adversaries as potential adversaries meant the “possibility of a kerfuffle,” said Howard, but after all, the future was uncertain, and strategy should serve among other things as a signaling device.<sup>182</sup> In the end, names *were* named: Russia and China, and North Korea and Iran as well.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Authors’ interview with ADM Michelle Howard, Pentagon, Arlington, VA, August 6, 2015.

<sup>180</sup> Authors’ telephone interview with CAPT Thomas R. Williams, March 12, 2015, one of the succession of CS21 drafters.

<sup>181</sup> According to Bryan Clark, who was intimately involved with the revision while serving as special assistant to the CNO (N00Z) “we didn’t realize initially about the importance of the international audience. But six months or a year in, [we saw that] international relationships were huge.” In Clark’s view, CS21R would have to play a part in bolstering those relationships. Authors’ interview with Bryan Clark, Washington, DC, July 14, 2015. On the secondary consequences of U.S. Navy capstone documents, among intended and unintended audiences, including friendly and allied navies, see Swartz with Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts*, 81.

<sup>182</sup> Dr. William Rosenau and ENS Hannah Kates, Interview with ADM Howard, August 6, 2015.

<sup>183</sup> General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr, Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, and Admiral Paul F. Zukunft, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower: Forward, Engaged, Ready (CS21R)* (Washington, DC: USMC, USN, and USCG, March 2015). Less contentiously, CS21R also names nonstate groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) as specific threats to U.S. security and interests.

## The Current Strategy Forum

With the QDR Report finally signed out, the CNO began to devote more attention to the drafting of CS21R, and to the concomitant revitalization of what became known as the Navy Strategic Enterprise.<sup>184</sup> Urged on and supported by RADM Foggo and Director of the Navy Staff VADM Scott “Notso” Swift, he unveiled his plan for a Navy Strategic Enterprise at a Navy Flag Officer and SES (NFOSES) Symposium in the spring of 2014. His next move was to “hijack” the agenda of the next annual Current Strategy Forum (CSF), scheduled for June 2014 at the Naval War College, and tie its subject matter more closely to the activities and concepts current in Washington and in the fleet, and to the revision of CS21.<sup>185</sup> The CNO discussed the elements of the enterprise in his speech at Newport, and it was also the subject of a closed flag officers-only discussion.

The Forum included a spirited open discussion of the pending revision of CS21R, chaired by RADM Foggo. Feedback they received at the Current Strategy Forum greatly influenced the views of the CNO and his flag officers and senior civilians when they returned to Washington to continue moving toward closure on revising the document. CNO ADM Greenert regarded the Current Strategy Forum of June 2014 at the Naval War College to have been a great success and a major milestone in the revitalization of Navy strategy.<sup>186</sup>

## RADM Foggo’s briefing

A couple of weeks after the Current Strategy Forum, RADM Foggo offered a snapshot of the strategy that was under revision to OPNAV’s one-star, two-star and Senior Executive Service (SES) leadership.<sup>187</sup> Of course, the version of CS21R that was finally unveiled publicly in March 2015 differed in some respects from what RADM Foggo described. But in substantive terms, RADM Foggo’s commentary was an intricate blueprint for the final document. Therefore, it is worth considering in some detail.

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<sup>184</sup> On the Navy Strategic Enterprise, see Lea and Polski, *Assessment of the Navy Strategic Enterprise*.

<sup>185</sup> “Hijack” was the CNO’s term in his public remarks. N51 and CNA were heavily involved in coordinating with the Naval War College to carry out the CNO’s intent. N3/N5 officers participated in strength, from VADM Howard on down. CNA analyst Peter Swartz chaired one of the CSF panels.

<sup>186</sup> For an alternate view, see <http://steeljawscribe.com/2014/06/25/a-guest-post-the-2014-current-strategy-forum-wheres-the-beef>.

<sup>187</sup> The following section is derived from RADM Foggo, N/3/N5B, “CS21 Refresh Overview” (PowerPoint presentation, July 2, 2014).

According to RADM Foggo’s briefing, a post-QDR “full-court press” had been underway for the past year. “Ends” (that is, naval *missions*, such as crisis response), “ways” (enduring *functions*, for example, sea control),<sup>188</sup> and “means” (“force design in terms of people, concepts, and capabilities), were to be CS21R’s organizing principles. Ultimately, these maritime ends, ways, and means were meant to undergird three overarching strategic objectives derived from the QDR, DSG, and NSS: (1) protect the homeland, (2) build global security, and (3) project power and win. Ultimately, as we will see, the CNO’s dislike for the “ends-ways-means” construct would result in adoption of different terminology in the final CS21R document.

A new function, ensuring “all-domain access”—a high priority for the CNO—was added as one of five enduring functions, which also included deterrence, power projection, sea control, and maritime security.<sup>189</sup>

Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Response (HA/DR) was no longer a stand-alone function—and had not been from the earliest drafts of CS21R. HA/DR was now regarded as a beneficiary of the services’ inherent power projection capabilities, as well as one of the sea services’ seven missions. LCDR Thane Clare, a key member of the writing team during the 2011–2013 period, explained that the decision to move HA/DR had been based on the conclusion that it was “implausible as a resourcing driver given increasing military threats and declining funding levels...HA/DR is an inherent capability of maritime warfighting forces, rather than a mission for which we’d fund purpose-built forces.”<sup>190</sup>

Forward presence, formerly designated a “core capability,” would become a “foundational principle.”<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Functions are “broad, general, and enduring roles for which an organization is designed, equipped and trained” (JP 1-02). These were known as “core capabilities” in the earlier iteration of CS21. The development of the revised strategy necessarily entailed lengthy staff discussions about definitions, concepts, and terminology—a challenge perhaps made more complex by the relative loose way in which the service traditionally employed its strategic lexicon. For representative examples of these discussions, see email from Mr. Bruce Stubbs to RADM Foggo and RDML McQuilkin, “Forward Presence as an ‘Enabling Function,’” July 3, 2014; and Mr. Bruce Stubbs to RADM Foggo and RDML McQuilkin, “Follow-up to Our Discussion on Seapower During Yesterday’s Meeting,” July 2, 2014 (Bruce Stubbs files).

<sup>189</sup> A2/AD, in turn, is made up of five elements: battlespace awareness; assured command and control; cyber; integrated fires; and electromagnetic maneuver warfare.) LCDR Mark M. Lawrence, *Tailoring the Global Network for Real Burden Sharing at Sea* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Federated Defense Project, August 2015), 38.

<sup>190</sup> Email message to the authors from CDR Thane C. Clare, May 2, 2015.

<sup>191</sup> Along with operating in “formal and informal networks.”<sup>191</sup> These two “principles” would merit a section of their own in the final CS21 revision document, parsed by geographic region.

RADM Foggo concluded with a set of recommendations derived from consultations with naval experts, who had stressed the need for CS21R to emphasize allies and partners, address readiness, provide a classified annex—and to link the strategy to force structure, a void that many naval commentators had long urged the service to fill.<sup>192</sup>

## Issues and constructs

### Issues

During the lengthy course of the CS21R drafting process, participants debated long and hard over a multitude of substantive and procedural issues. These included (but were not limited to) the most important issues we identify below:<sup>193</sup>

- What was the purpose of the new strategy? Who needed it and why? What was it supposed to do?
- How should the document describe the role of seapower in advancing national interests and what kind of navy the country should build?
- Who was the strategy's main audience(s)? Why? What were they supposed to do with it?
- How big should the Navy drafting team be and why? Just what is it that they all had to do?

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<sup>192</sup> Swartz, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1970-2010)*, vol. I, *Comparisons, Contrasts, and Changes* p. 70. Indeed, the desire to link objectives more tightly with resources was reflected in drafts written relatively early in the process: “we were definitely including a force design section as early as the late 2012 [and] early 2013 drafts.” Email message to the authors from Clare, May 2, 2015.

<sup>193</sup> This listing was derived from numerous sources, including CS21 and CS21R themselves; e-mail correspondence and interviews with participants; Department of the Navy, *Navy Strategic Playbook for a Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower: Forward, Engaged, Ready*, n.d. (FOUO); *Fact Sheet: A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower: Forward, Engaged, Ready* (source unindicated but drafted in OPNAV N51, undated but released on March 13, 2015); Mr. Bruce Stubbs, remarks at award ceremony (The Pentagon, Arlington, VA, December 21, 2015); authors' interview with Mr. Stubbs, Pentagon, Arlington, VA, December 22, 2015, and email message from Mr. Stubbs to RADM Foggo and RDML McQuilkin, “Forward Presence as an ‘Enabling Function,’” July 3, 2014, p. 1. For a discussion of internal issues during the crafting of CS21 (2005–7), see Ennis, “Inside the New Maritime Strategy.”

- How to accommodate the views of three separate services?
- Should the tri-service working group develop a strategy and submit it for subsequent adjudication by senior officers of the services? Or should the services—especially the Navy, as lead drafting service—bring their own outlines and drafts to the tri-service working group for discussion and wordsmithing?
- How to quickly assimilate views of numerous Navy coordinatees and approval authorities?
- How close to CS21 should CS21R adhere?
- What should the balance be between “warfighting” and maritime security operations and capabilities?
- How and how much should CS21R distance itself from such key ideas in the CS21 as “preventing wars is as important as winning wars”; “protect and sustain the peaceful global system”; and “humanitarian assistance and disaster response” as “core capabilities”?
- If “humanitarian assistance and disaster response” was no longer to be considered a “core capability” (or “essential function”), what was it? A “naval mission”? A part of the “power projection” function? Both?
- How should the CNO’s concept of “All-Domain Access” be integrated seamlessly into CS21R—and highlighted?
- Are international readers a primary audience critical to keep in mind while drafting the document, or a secondary audience not in need of any special language and targeting?
- Retain, modify or replace the three main 2007 CS21 typologies: “strategic imperatives” (also termed “key tasks”), “core capabilities,” and “implementation priorities?”
- Given the CNO’s antipathy toward an “ends-ways-means” construct, what alternative constructs should be considered and used?
- What exactly was a “foundational principle”? An “essential function”? A “naval mission”? What were the differences between them? How did they relate to each other? How many were there of each, and what were they called?
- Which ideas belonged in which typologies? Was “forward presence” a “core capability” (as in 2007), a “foundational principle” (as it finally was termed in 2015), or something else?

- Should the document have a subtitle? If so, should it precede or follow the title? And what was the relationship of the subtitle to the various typologies presented in the text of the document?
- How, if at all, should the document reflect the current or draft *National Security Strategy*, the current or draft Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff *National Military Strategy*, the current or draft classified DOD *Guidance for the Employment of the Force* (GEF), the current or draft annual classified *Defense Planning Guidance* (DPG), and/or current or draft Joint Operations Concepts? Should national-level strategic objectives be explicitly listed, or assumed?
- How closely should the document adhere to typologies presented in recent national security documents like the *Defense Strategic Guidance* (DSG) and the *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR)?
- How should the drafting process best take into account and align with the timelines of these Administration documents?
- Given the emphasis in the QDR, the DPG and the GEF on deploying warfighting and war-winning capabilities, was the CS21R draft still too focused on forward presence, engagement, readiness, and ship numbers, despite its distancing itself in many ways from its predecessor? The CNO, of course, was a strong advocate of “warfighting first” *as well as* “be ready” and “operate forward,” but some in OSD (including the Secretary of Defense) worried that too many Navy resources were going to implementing the latter two concepts, at the expense of capabilities for the former.<sup>194</sup>
- Should discussions of Maritime Security Operations to protect the global ocean commons be decoupled from warfighting, so as to assuage skittish foreign governments and navies wary of maritime cooperation’s potential for sucking them into U.S.-led wars? Or should it be clearly stated that maritime security operations were also an integral and necessary part of U.S. warfighting?
- To what extent should contemporary—and contentious—defense concepts such as the “Pacific Rebalance,” “Air-Sea Battle,” and the “Third Offset Strategy” be incorporated in the document, if at all?

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<sup>194</sup> This perceived dichotomy would be made public in December 2015 with the circulation of a Secretary of Defense memorandum to the Secretary of the Navy directing him to put more resources against several specific warfighting programs, at the expense of deploying more ships forward. See “Document: Budget Directive Letter from SECDEF Carter to SECNAV Mabus,” *USNI News* (December 17, 2015). <https://news.usni.org/2015/12/17/document-budget-directive-letter-from-secdef-carter-to-secnav-mabus>

- Does “strategic deterrence” differ in some significant way from mere “deterrence”?
- How should “strategic sealift” and “naval special warfare” be treated?
- Should the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) be included in the drafting and signing process? Should its equities be considered for inclusion?
- How should the regions of the world be characterized? How many were there and what should they be called? Should the “Western Pacific” region now be termed the “Indo-Asia-Pacific”? How should the Arctic now be treated?
- Which specific countries, challenges and threats should be identified by name, and how should they be characterized?
- Into which foreign languages should it be translated, and why?
- How specific should the “force design” chapter be? How should it be parsed? Should its elements be prioritized?
- To what extent should CS21R be linked to (i.e., “inform,” “shape” or “drive”) the Navy’s next Program Objective Memorandum (POM) and annual budget request submissions? How should it do this?
- Should the CS21R timeline slip again, due to for example: A critical personnel change? A new CNO document? A new DOD document? What will have to be rewritten/ re-coordinated if the deadline is slipped yet again?
- What photographs will be used to illustrate the final published document? What messages are they expected to convey?
- How and to what extent should the projected contents of the proposed but as yet unwritten classified annex influence the drafting of CS21R?
- How is the document to be disseminated? Who will be responsible to do what?
- Does an updated CS21 now require an updated NOC, NWP-1, and/or NSP/NSPG?
- How will we measure the “success” of CS21R?
- When should we start thinking about updating CS21R?

## Constructing the construct

Drafters, overseers, and the CNO differed on how the document should be organized.<sup>195</sup> N51B's Bruce Stubbs favored a classic three-part construct laying out “ends,” “ways,” and “means.” So too did CAPT McLain, RDML Smith, and RADM Foggo, but the CNO found it not to his liking, in part because it had not been used in CS21. Also, reconciling explicit ends, ways and means among all three sea services would not be easy.<sup>196</sup> CNA Vice President Dr. Eric Thompson helped the N51 leadership create an appropriate construct that would contain the content of the three-part “end-ways-means” typology without parsing or labeling it as such. As N51B commented later,

As a result the 2015 strategy does not have three chapters—one each for the ends, ways and means. Instead it has four chapters—the first chapter on the current and future security environment and the second chapter on *Sea Power's* value proposition for the nation. Then drawing upon these two chapters, the strategy articulates in the third chapter how the Naval services will employ its forces to achieve national military ends, and how the naval services will design and build its forces as its ends in the fourth and final chapter. Coming to this realization about the four-chapter structure for the strategy took time and a lot of trial and effort.<sup>197</sup>

Section II discussed at length the two signature concepts of ADM Greenert that he had written about previously and that were touted as the strategy's “two foundational principles” in the CS21 “Introduction: *U.S. Forward Naval Presence* and a *Global Network of Navies*.” This section is parsed by the world's vital maritime regions, beginning with the *Indo-Asia-Pacific* and concluding with the *Arctic and Antarctic*.

Section III of the strategy was parsed by the five “essential functions” of naval forces: *All domain access, deterrence, sea control, power projection, and maritime security*. Listed as such in CS21R's table of contents and used as the organizing construct

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<sup>195</sup> Previous Navy capstone documents since 1970 had used a variety of constructs, the three most common being “Navy capabilities” or “missions”; “spectrum of conflict”; and “pillars.” Details are in Swartz with Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1970-2010)*, vol. I, 30-37.

<sup>196</sup> CAPT John McLain comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>197</sup> Mr. Bruce Stubbs public remarks at an OPNAV award ceremony at the Pentagon in his honor, presided over by VCNO ADM Howard, December 21, 2015.

(with bold section heads) in Section III, these would naturally become the only construct that many readers would cite and use from the document.

In the end, this typology obviously was simply the result of adding *all domain access* to and subtracting *forward presence* and *humanitarian assistance and disaster relief* from the listing of “expanded core capabilities” that had marked the 2007 document. In fact, determining this list was a highly contentious issue that consumed hours and hours—and years—of analysis and debate. Some, for example, argued to include *sealift* in the list of functions, but that was not in the end to be.<sup>198</sup>

Also presented in Section III—but not in a manner designed to catch the eye of any but the most thorough reader—was a listing of seven “naval missions:” *Defend the homeland, deter conflict, respond to crises, defeat aggression, protect the maritime commons, strengthen partnerships, and provide humanitarian assistance and disaster response.*

Coming up with a final list of seven “naval missions” had been as contentious and lengthy an internal sea services process as determining the five “essential functions.” Some wanted to use the 10 “primary missions” listed in the DSG, signed out in January 2012 by the president and secretary of defense. They saw virtue in binding the Navy’s strategy document closely in that fashion to the nation’s premier defense strategy publication. Others, including the CNO, preferred to use the 10 missions as a basis for determining a set of missions more specific to just the sea services, not to the entire Department of Defense. The CNO’s view prevailed.<sup>199</sup> The seven resultant naval missions represented a restatement and conflation of the 10 original missions in the DSG.<sup>200</sup>

Although mentioned (along with the five “functions”) in the “Introduction” to CS21R as well, the seven “missions” were in neither instance broken out or highlighted in any way from the rest of the text, nor did they appear in the table of contents. Each of the five functions was described, however, as supporting a specific slice of the missions (or all of them). Buried as they were in the text, the final rendition of the “seven missions” may not have reflected the enormous amount of heat and light that had been devoted to them.

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<sup>198</sup> Although given an opportunity, the Navy’s Military Sealift Command did not weigh in heavily in opposition to the omission. (From Mr. Bruce Stubbs comment on an earlier draft of this paper). On the occasional appearance of Sealift in similar typologies in past Navy capstone documents, see Swartz with Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1970-2010)*, vol. I, 31-32.

<sup>199</sup> Yet the CNO cited the 10 DSG missions in his annual testimony Posture Statements.

<sup>200</sup> Mr. Bruce Stubbs comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

Creating Section IV of the strategy (on “Force Design”) proved a particularly thorny task: Be too general and the section would be just a laundry list of generic capabilities. Be too specific, and the section would be rendered obsolete within no more than a matter of months by changes to the Navy’s program and budgets generated by unforeseen world events, political or budgetary decisions, or technological advances.<sup>201</sup> Leave the section out entirely and incur the same opprobrium that dogged its 2007 predecessor. In the end, 10 carefully worded pages were crafted, giving as much detail on force design as the three services dared. In any event, the CNO did not wish to tie his sequestration-impacted programmed and budgeted forces too closely to his strategy in this document: For that he potentially had his classified Navy-only *Navy Strategic Plan (NSP) for POM 15* (published in November 2012).

## Another candidate construct: The “six themes”

N51B Mr. Bruce Stubbs and others, supported by N51 RDML Bill McQuilkin, developed what they called the “six themes” of the strategy: *Warfighting First; Being Where it Matters, When it Matters; Continuing to Strengthen Alliances and Partnerships; Assuring Global Access; Rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific; and Building the Future Sea Services*.

They viewed such a laydown of concepts as the optimum way to present the ideas contained in the strategy. CAPT “Tank” Michael and others within the Navy opposed adding this typology to the document, and it was never included in the CS21R document.<sup>202</sup> The Marines and Coast Guard were never approached on this issue, and never approved (or disapproved) the construct.<sup>203</sup> Still, RDML McQuilkin, Mr. Stubbs and others tenaciously continued to believe that this was the best way to convey the concepts presented in the strategy.<sup>204</sup> Given its single-service origins and focus, the “six themes” construct could also be considered a *Navy* strategy, vice a *naval* or *maritime* strategy.

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<sup>201</sup> On the challenges to linking Navy strategy with Navy programming and budgeting, see Russell et al., *Navy Strategy Development*; Young, “When Programming Trumps Policy and Plans”; Lea and Polski, *Assessment of the Navy Strategic Enterprise*; and Swartz with Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts: Introduction, Background and Analyses*, 46, 67, 88-89.

<sup>202</sup> Peter M. Swartz interviews with Mr. Bruce Stubbs, November 4, 2015, and August 1, 2016.

<sup>203</sup> John Berry comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>204</sup> Peter M. Swartz interview with Mr. Bruce Stubbs, November 4, 2015.

The six themes would not appear in the final CS21R document. They would, however, be presented, as will be seen, in numerous Navy media ostensibly propounding CS21R, sending an alternatively organized—but related—message.

## Yet another construct: “Six programmatic priorities”

In August 2014, the CNO released his *Navigation Plan 2015-2019*. In it he asserted that

Six programmatic priorities guided our budget submission as we planned for the future: (1) maintain a credible, modern, and survivable sea-based strategic deterrent, (2) sustain forward presence, distributed globally in places that count, (3) preserve the means to win decisively in one multi-phase contingency operation and deny the objectives of another aggressor in a second region, (4) focus on critical afloat and ashore readiness to ensure our Navy is adequately funded and ready, (5) enhance the Navy’s asymmetric capabilities in the physical domains as well as in cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum, and (6) sustain a relevant industrial base, particularly in shipbuilding.<sup>205</sup>

The CNO and the Navy would use this typology in presenting their program to the Congress in the *U.S. Navy Program Guide 2015* and in the following year’s CNO *Navigation Plan* as well. So it was a core part of the Navy’s strategic messaging to Capitol Hill and also to its officer corps. It would never be folded into CS21R, however.

## N51B’s views

As we have seen, the Deputy Director of the Strategy and Policy Division, Mr. Bruce Stubbs (N51B) was a major participant in the internal conceptual Navy debates leading up to finalizing CS21R.<sup>206</sup> He maintained that he was particularly focused on *developing a strategy*, as opposed to *crafting a document*.

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<sup>205</sup> Admiral Jonathan Greenert, USN, *Navigation Plan 2015-19* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations), August 2014.

<sup>206</sup> And thereafter. For more on Mr. Stubbs’s thinking, see his “Rebuttal” blog. Note that he never mentions or uses CS21R in the blog, however.

In particular, he was an advocate throughout for<sup>207</sup>

- Viewing the strategy as two distinct but related strategies, addressing:
  - How the Naval Services employ their forces to achieve national military objectives—articulating the “Value-Added proposition for Sea Power”
  - How the naval services achieve their force structure objectives—describing the forces and capabilities that the naval services require.
- An “Ends-Ways-Means” construct for organizing the strategy
- A “Six themes” construct for describing the strategy
- The need to align the strategy with administration documents and their timelines
- The need for the strategy to be “fiscally informed,” but also to inform the Program Objective Memorandum (POM), and to be clearly linked to it
- All elements of the Navy incorporating the ideas and terminology in CS21R into strategy- and policy-level sections of any documents they published, coordinating the wording with N51
- N51 participation in the Navy QDR input effort
- Deleting the “Forward, Engaged, Ready” subtitle
- Identifying a cadre of the Navy’s appropriately educated and experienced strategists and assigning them to billets where they can use their education and experience, through a formal Navy process agreed to by the CNO, N3/N5, N1 and the Bureau of Naval Personnel.
- Support for OPNAV N51 strategists from the Naval War College, the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), CNA, and outside expert consultants
- Recognizing naval diplomacy as a stand-alone core function
- De-conflating *sea power* and *forward presence*.

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<sup>207</sup> Sources include interviews with Mr. Stubbs, internal N51B working papers and memoranda, and his remarks at his award ceremony in the Pentagon, December 21, 2015.

## Home stretch

As 2014 progressed, final drafts were circulated for review among the senior leadership of the three services, a necessary and valuable process that tended, however, to drag out timelines even more.

### Navy reviews: Greybeards, Booz Allen, Wikistrat, flag officers

In July, N3/N5B RADM Foggo chaired a workshop at CNA in which some two dozen civilian naval expert “greybeards” critiqued the current draft of the strategy.<sup>208</sup> CNA Vice President Dr. Eric Thompson acted as facilitator. This enabled the OPNAV drafters and overseers present to listen first-hand to commentary by civilian naval experts, former naval strategists, and others outside the Navy. A resultant Navy re-draft was more explicit in its force design section, added numbers of ships, and removed a redundant section on Navy missions.<sup>209</sup>

The “greybeards” meeting was followed by a short round of offsite meetings supported by defense contractor Booz Allen Hamilton, Inc. RADM Foggo (N3/N5B), RDML McQuilkin (N51), SES Bruce Stubbs (N51B), Dr. Eric Thompson (CNA Vice President and Strategic Studies Director), and others participated. The participants debated and came to agreement on wording, document framework, the nature of the Navy’s value proposition to the nation, and other issues.<sup>210</sup>

The following month, N3/N5 also contracted with Wikistrat, a crowd-sourcing consulting firm, for further validation and critique of its ideas through their new and innovative technique of on-line “collaborative competition.”<sup>211</sup> As one result, the term “Asia-Pacific” was changed to “Indo-Asia-Pacific” in the next draft of the document.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> “Greybeards” present included Elbridge Colby, Dr. Bernard Cole, Dr. Kori Schake, Dr. Thomas Mahnken, Dr. Frank Hoffman, Mr. Ronald O’Rourke, Dr. Scott Truver, FSO Thomas Duffy, Mr. Trip Barber, and others.

<sup>209</sup> CAPT Frank Michael e-mail to RADM Jeffrey A. Harley, “CS-21 Process and Guidance History,” March 6, 2015 (from N51B files).

<sup>210</sup> Comments by Dr. Eric Thompson on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>211</sup> Wikistrat participants included, among others, Dr. Thomas Barnett, Dr. Robert Farley, Dr. John Hanley, Dr. James Joyner, Dr. Robbin Laird, Dr. Martin Murphy, Dr. Bruce Wald, Dr. Richard Weitz, Dr. Robert Worley, and several non-U.S. nationals

<sup>212</sup> CAPT Frank Michael email, March 6, 2015.

The CNO then requested comments on the draft from about 10 retired Navy four-star admirals, which “strengthened several areas of the document, provided final endorsement.”<sup>213</sup>

With most of the drafting, staffing, coordinating and approving completed, RADM Foggo detached in October 2014, promoted to Vice Admiral and taking command of the U.S. Sixth Fleet. His relief as N3/N5B, RADM Jeffrey Harley, took over to plan, orchestrate and execute the document’s roll-out, publication and dissemination.<sup>214</sup>

## Tri-service agreement and the U.S. Naval Institute

OPNAV assimilated the feedback from the “Greybeards” panel, the Booz Allen meetings, the Wikistrat initiative, and various rounds of active duty and retired flag officer comment and discussion, and led another round of tri-service meetings to gain buy-in from the Marine Corps and Coast Guard. This stretched out timelines still further.

Earlier in 2014, the Navy had anticipated a document roll-out by the end of the year, using the good offices of the U.S. Naval Institute. As late as November 2014, ADM Greenert thought that still might be the case.<sup>215</sup> Accordingly, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Institute, VADM Peter Daly (Ret.), reserved the Newseum on Pennsylvania Avenue in downtown Washington, near Capitol Hill, as an appropriate venue for the occasion, scheduled for December 4.<sup>216</sup> But ADM Papp retired as Commandant of the Coast Guard in May, and Gen Amos was to retire as Commandant of the Marine Corps in October. Their reliefs needed some time to engage on the document’s content, and had actually to be in place to legitimately sign it. For these and other reasons, the deadline slipped again.

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> RADM Harley was a surface warfare officer with master’s degrees from the Naval War College and Tufts University’s Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and previous OPNAV policy experience in Deep Blue and N00Z. He had also served as a Military Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, Vice Director for Strategy, Plans and Policy (J-5) at U.S. Central Command headquarters, and as Director of the White House Situation Room.

<sup>215</sup> “We completed a final draft of our maritime strategy ‘A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower,’ and will publish it by the end of the calendar year 2014.” *CNO’s Position Report: 2014* (November 21, 2014).

<sup>216</sup> VADM Daly was well familiar with Navy strategy development and dissemination, having served as Assistant Deputy CNO for Information, Plans and Strategy (N3/N5B) under VADM John Morgan during the endgame and rollout of the original CS21 in 2007.

A month after taking office, the new Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen Joseph Dunford, asked the Assistant Commandant, Gen John Paxton, to conduct a detailed review of the draft for him. Based on that review, improvements were made during the following two months to the then-current draft.<sup>217</sup>

As it became apparent that the sea services would miss the December CS21R rollout deadline, they and the Naval Institute flexed and held a “Defense Forum” at the Newseum on the appointed date instead, hosted by ADM Daly. The opening panel of the forum featured presentations by OPNAV N3/N5 RADM Donegan, Deputy Commandant of the Coast Guard for Operations VADM Charles Michel, and BGen Joseph Shrader, the Commander of the U.S. Marine Corps Systems Command, laying out the changes in the world environment that had necessitated revising CS21, without spelling out what exactly the forthcoming revision would include.<sup>218</sup>

## *Combined Seapower: U.S. Navy–Royal Navy cooperation*

In December 2014, CNO ADM Greenert and Admiral Sir George Zambellas (the Royal Navy’s First Sea Lord) signed a bilateral document entitled *Combined Seapower: A Shared Vision for Royal Navy–United States Navy Cooperation*. A Royal Navy-OPNAV N51 study group had been formed in September 2013 at the behest of the CNO and First Sea Lord, to identify opportunities to enhance ties between the two navies.<sup>219</sup> The document stated that it had drawn from the *European Union Maritime Security Strategy*, the United Kingdom’s *National Strategy for Maritime Security*, and the U.S. Marine Corps’ *Expeditionary Force 21*, as well as from the tri-service revision to CS21 to be released in 2015.<sup>220</sup> The vision it expounded encompassed interoperability and mutual technology investment, combined aircraft carrier operations, force and capability planning, officer exchanges, and collaborative force management.

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<sup>217</sup> John Berry chronology.

<sup>218</sup> At VADM Daly’s request, Peter Swartz (CNA) served as panel moderator. Also on the Naval Institute–devised program was Representative Randy Forbes (R-VA), Chairman of the House Armed Services Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee, who had taken a keen interest in Navy strategic competence and strategy development.

<sup>219</sup> For a discussion, see “US, UK Navies Sign Framework for Future Cooperation,” U.S. *Navy News*, #NNS141215-16 (Navy Chief of Information Office, December 15, 2014), [http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=84898](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=84898).

<sup>220</sup> <http://www.navy.mil/docs/RN-USN%20Combined%20Strategic%20Narrative%20CNO%20Signed.pdf>.

## Finalizing the document

As 2014 turned into 2015, ADM Greenert's own retirement as CNO was now looming on the horizon. Some suggested that signature of the document be delayed for his successor.<sup>221</sup> ADM Greenert decided, however, not to drag an over-long process out even more, but also not to entangle release of the strategy in the upcoming annual, Congressional budget request testimony season scheduled for February 2015.<sup>222</sup> On January 22, 2015 he sent the Commandants of the Marine Corps and Coast Guard a personal e-mail asking for their concurrence in an attached final draft—a draft that they and their staffs had already vetted.<sup>223</sup> Their concurrence and signatures were forthcoming, and a roll-out date was set for March, avoiding being overshadowed by reporting on budget testimony on Capitol Hill, but allowing less than two months to finalize document production, the print run, a rollout ceremony and initial dissemination.

In addition to the signatures of the three uniformed sea service chiefs, the 2015 document also included a preface signed by Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus.<sup>224</sup> Then-Under Secretary of the Navy Robert Work had weighed in heavily early on in the process that the secretary must sign the document.<sup>225</sup> During the revision process, civilians and military officers in OPNAV debated the merits of having SECNAV Ray Mabus sign the new document, with some individuals arguing that if the SECNAV signed, the secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), under which the Coast Guard operates in peacetime, would also have to sign. This proved not to be the case, and SECNAV Mabus added his signature and a preface.<sup>226</sup> In his

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<sup>221</sup> ADM John Richardson would be publicly nominated as ADM Greenert's successor in May 2015, to relieve him in September.

<sup>222</sup> Peter M. Swartz interview with Mr. Bruce Stubbs, N51B, 6 July 2016.

<sup>223</sup> John Berry e-mail to Peter Swartz (CNA), 25 April 2016.

<sup>224</sup> In 2007, Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Donald C. Winter had not been asked to sign *CS21*—to his considerable displeasure. Secretary Winter not only regarded this as a slight to his office, but he also had major substantive disagreements with the tone and substance of the document itself. See Swartz with Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001-2010)*, 164; and Haynes, *Toward a New Maritime Strategy*, 228-237, passim. Note the tone and emphases of his speech at the 2008 Current Strategy Forum in Newport, RI, [http://www.navy.mil/navydata/people/secnave/Winter/Speech/Current\\_Strategy\\_Forum\\_17Jun\\_08.pdf](http://www.navy.mil/navydata/people/secnave/Winter/Speech/Current_Strategy_Forum_17Jun_08.pdf).

<sup>225</sup> Recall that as a CSBA analyst, Mr. Work was well familiar with the 2007 *CS21* document. He served as Under Secretary of the Navy from May 2009 through March 2013. He became Deputy Secretary of Defense in April 2014.

<sup>226</sup> Authors' interview with Mr. Bruce Stubbs, Pentagon, Arlington, VA, October 22, 2015.

preface, he included his own preferred construct in presenting the Navy's roles, rather than foreshadowing and supporting the construct in the document.<sup>227</sup>

## New national strategy and a new SECDEF at the 11th hour

On February 6, 2015, only a month before the planned release of CS21R, President Obama released a new *National Security Strategy*, superseding his previous strategy of May 2010. This new statement stressed the importance and modalities of U.S. global leadership throughout, stating—in a phrase borrowed from the U.S. Navy of the CS21 era—“American leadership is a global force for good.”<sup>228</sup>

It clearly asserted:

Our military will remain ready to deter and defeat threats to the homeland, including against missile, cyber, and terrorist attacks, while mitigating the effects of potential attacks and natural disasters. Our military is postured globally to protect our citizens and interests, preserve regional stability, render humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and build the capacity of our partners to join with us in meeting security challenges. U.S. forces will continue to defend the homeland, conduct global counterterrorism operations, assure allies, and deter aggression through forward presence and engagement. If deterrence fails, U.S. forces will be ready to project power globally to defeat and deny aggression in multiple theaters.<sup>229</sup>

This was a policy statement within which the concepts in CS21R comfortably nestled—and the 2015 *National Security Strategy* was cited in the fact sheet that accompanied CS21R at its roll-out ceremony. The new national strategy statement, however, was not referred to in the CS21R document itself.

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<sup>227</sup> Secretary Mabus' oft-repeated construct was his “4 P's”: “People, Platforms, Power; and Partnerships.” In his preface (originally drafted by his speechwriter, LCDR B. J. Armstrong), he wrote: “Looking at how we support our people, build the right platforms, power them to achieve efficient global capability, and develop critical partnerships will be central to its successful execution and to providing that unique capability: presence.”

<sup>228</sup> President Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, February 2015), 2.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid* 7-8.

A week and a half later, Dr. Ashton Carter was sworn in as the nation's 25<sup>th</sup> Secretary of Defense, replacing Chuck Hagel, who had announced his resignation three months earlier. These events did not prove to disrupt the sea services' plans for a release of their new strategy statement the following month, but they did divert the attention of that strategy's potential readership, and had implications for the strategy's implementation. Serious readers of CS21R could question its authority, given that it did not reference the latest *National Security Strategy* nor did its development occur under the leadership of the incumbent Secretary of Defense.

## Getting the word out

### Planning the rollout

N3/N5 created and distributed a very detailed rollout plan for CS21R, coordinating closely with the office of the Chief of Naval Information (CHINFO) and the Navy's Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA).<sup>230</sup>

### Rollout

#### *The CSIS-USNI ceremony and congressional testimony*

The revised maritime strategy, unveiled in a series of events in the spring of 2015, represented both change and continuity from 2007. Under the sponsorship of the U.S. Naval Institute, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington hosted the launch of CS21R on March 13, 2015, with the CNO, USMC Commandant Gen Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., and USCG Commandant ADM Paul F. Zukunft. The event was chaired by well-known and widely respected naval strategic thought leader ADM James Stavridis (Ret.).<sup>231</sup> (A tri-service embargoed news conference had been held the day before.) On March 18, the three maritime service

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<sup>230</sup> The plan was laid out in great detail in a series of seven unclassified/draft/pre-decisional slides: "CS21R Campaign Plan (Pre-Rollout)" and "CS21R Campaign Plan (Post-Rollout) (6 Mar 2016); and "CS21R Execution Timeline" (3 Mar 2015). N51B files.

<sup>231</sup> The video of the event is available at <http://csis.org/event/cooperative-strategy-21st-century-seapower-forward-engaged-ready>.

chiefs testified on CS21R before the House Transportation and Infrastructures, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation.<sup>232</sup>

### *Distribution*

The document was published electronically and in hard copy, and posted prominently on the U.S. Navy public website. It was reprinted in the U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*.<sup>233</sup> It was also advertised by CHINFO in *Naval Aviation News*.<sup>234</sup> Hard copies were distributed to the office of each member of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives. In an effort to reach a broad international audience—and for the first time ever—the Navy ensured that its basic strategy document was translated into and published in seven key foreign languages, including Chinese, Korean and Arabic.<sup>235</sup>

### Follow-through

Navy flag officers from the CNO on down began to brief and write about it to appropriate audiences, at home and abroad. Among the first out of the box was the Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and U.S. Fifth Fleet, VADM John “Fozzie” Miller, who posted a widely-circulated article on his command’s website on March 15.<sup>236</sup>

On April 13, RADM Donegan (N3/N5) and his U.S. Marine Corps and Coast Guard counterparts participated in an open roundtable discussion on the new strategy at the well-attended Navy League of the United States 2015 Sea-Air-Space Exposition at National Harbor, MD. Said RADM Donegan at that session, “We think this strategy is a strategy that the American people expect of our Navy.”<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> United States House of Representatives, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructures, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, “Naval Cooperative Strategy,” March 18, 2015, <http://transportation.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=398723>.

<sup>233</sup> See U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 141 (April 2015), supplement following page 96. This issue serendipitously also contained an article by former Secretary of the Navy John Lehman on the role of *Proceedings* in promulgating and debating *The Maritime Strategy* of the 1980s.

<sup>234</sup> Navy Chief of Information Office, “Forward, Engaged, Ready,” *Naval Aviation News* (Spring 2015), 9.

<sup>235</sup> Also Japanese, Spanish, French and Portuguese, although not Russian, German, or Hindi.

<sup>236</sup> VADM John Miller USN, “Our New Maritime Strategy and the Fifth Fleet,” USNAVCENT/C5F website, March 15, 2015.

<sup>237</sup> Mass Communication Specialist 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Dustin Knight, “NNS150414-11. Military Leaders Talk Seapower at SAS Expo,” (*Navy News Service* April 14, 2015) See also William Mathews,

N3/N5 officers provided initial briefings in various venues. RDML McQuilkin (N51), for example, personally travelled to India, Sri Lanka and other key countries to explain the strategy. RADM Harley (N3/N5B) briefed the new strategy at an informal, off-the record Strategy Discussion Group (SDG) meeting. He also briefed and discussed it with analysts and leaders at CNA, to provide context for that organization's analyses for the three sea services.

VADM Jamie Foggo, who had earlier been a key architect of the revision to CS21, provided his views on that experience as well as on how his new command—the U.S. Sixth Fleet—was operationalizing the strategy, in a signed article in the U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* “Naval Review” issue.<sup>238</sup>

A year later, VADM Foggo weighed in again (with a CNA colleague) to note the “critical importance of all-domain access and deterrence” in CS21R.<sup>239</sup> The following month, VADM Foggo and Dr. Eric Thompson—Vice President and Director for Strategic Studies at CNA—published an article on “Implementing the Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority in Europe and Africa.” While the article dealt largely with ADM Richardson’s “Design,” published in January 2016, it did so by invoking the tri-service CS21R as having “provided general guidance and let each Service decide how it will go about fulfilling its functions and accomplishing its missions.”<sup>240</sup> Both VADM Foggo and Dr. Thompson had played important roles at various points in the creation of CS21R, and had the background, knowledge and personal commitment to the document to discuss it effectively and authoritatively, tying it to CNO ADM Richardson’s “Design.”

In the spring of 2016, Ms. Margaret Palmieri, the Director of the Integrated Fires Division of the OPNAV Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Information Dominance (N2/N6), weighed in. She began a discussion of the status of Electromagnetic Maneuver Warfare in the Navy with CS21R’s establishment of “All-Domain Access” as

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“Service Officials Note Changing World that prompted Maritime Strategy Update,” *Seapower* post April 13, 2015. <http://www.seapowermagazine.org/stories/20150413-new-strategy.html> The U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD)—which had not been a party to the CS21R effort—participated (somewhat awkwardly) in the panel as well. CDR Dana Reid e-mail to Peter M. Swartz (CNA) May 25, 2016.

<sup>238</sup> VADM James G. Foggo and CDR Philip R. Rosi, “Putting CS21R to Work,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 141 (May 2015).

<sup>239</sup> VADM James Foggo III and Dr. Alarik Fritz, “The Fourth Battle of the Atlantic,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 142 (June 2016) 18–21.

<sup>240</sup> James G. Foggo III and Eric Thompson, “Implementing the Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority in Europe and Africa,” *Prism* 6 (July 25, 2016), <http://cco.ndu.edu/News/Article/840761/implementing-the-design-for-maintaining-maritime-superiority-in-europe-and-afri/>.

a new maritime function that requires the sea services to overcome anti-access and area-denial threats and establish freedom of maneuver across all domains—including the electromagnetic spectrum.<sup>241</sup>

## Resurrection and co-existence of the “six key themes”

As discussed earlier, during the 2014 endgame, RDML McQuilkin, Mr. Stubbs and others had advocated parsing the ideas contained in CS21R into “six key themes:” *Warfighting First; Being Where it Matters, When it Matters; Continuing to Strengthen Alliances and Partnerships; Assuring Global Access; Rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific; and Building the Future Sea Services*. These themes never made it into the text of the tri-service strategy, but continued to be advocated by Mr. Stubbs and others, who used them as their preferred alternative construct to describe the Navy’s strategy even during CS21’s rollout and beyond—sometimes alongside and sometimes in lieu of the constructs actually contained in the document.

### *The Fact Sheet*

At the roll-out event, OPNAV N3/N5 passed out “Fact Sheets” with supplementary information not included in the formal document, including descriptions of the six key themes; what had endured from the 2007 strategy; what was new in the 2015 strategy; and the strategic continuum of concomitant Navy strategy initiatives.<sup>242</sup>

### *The Playbook*

To explain how to promulgate and discuss CS21R, OPNAV N51 produced a very substantive and highly detailed “playbook,” including the “fact sheet,” “elevator speeches,” briefing slides, talking points and historical vignettes to help explain how to use the revised strategy to senior U.S. military and civilian leaders.<sup>243</sup> The playbook was organized around the “six key themes,” not the missions, functions or principles laid out in the published CS21R document.

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<sup>241</sup> Margaret Palmieri, “Electromagnetic Maneuver Warfare Is Here,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 142 (April 2016), 83-85.

<sup>242</sup> “Fact Sheet: *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower: Forward, Engaged, Ready*” (unsigned, n.d.). The fact sheet was also posted on the Navy website for a time, then replaced with a graphic illustrating the “Forward, Engaged, Ready” subtitle.

<sup>243</sup> Department of the Navy, *Navy Strategic Playbook for a Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower: Forward, Engaged, Ready* (n.d., FOUO). N51B files.

### *The display*

A display was mounted on a passageway in the Pentagon to publicize the new strategy and its ideas.<sup>244</sup> The display was entitled *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*, but was not organized according to that document’s construct or terminology, nor was there any reference in the display to the existence of an actual publication, or the fact that it had been signed by the uniformed heads of three armed services. Organized by a variant of the “six key themes” construct, with five catch-phrases extracted from the document’s “Foreword” and “Preface,” it sent a differently organized—although related—message.

### *The National Interest posting*

A month after CS21R was released, RDML McQuilkin, Mr. Stubbs, and CAPT Michael published a detailed explanation of the “2015 Maritime Strategy” “from a U.S. Navy perspective” on a leading national security affairs website.<sup>245</sup> This Navy-only statement cited the 2015 *National Security Strategy*, and was organized by the “six key themes” (which they termed “essential functions.”) There was no mention of the seven “naval missions” or the five “essential functions” presented in CS21R (other than discussing “all domain access” as a new “essential function” in “our strategy” (but not as one of the article’s six “essential functions”). It also mentioned the existence of a “separate, Navy-only classified annex.”<sup>246</sup>

### *Alternative wordings*

Not only was this construct not congruent with the way the strategy’s ideas were presented in the formal document, but its wording was itself presented inconsistently:

- In the “fact sheet” the six themes were termed: Warfighting First; Being Where it Matters, When it Matters; Continuing to Strengthen Alliances and Partnerships; Assuring Global Access; Rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific; and Building the Future Sea Services.

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<sup>244</sup> Displayed at the juncture of the 5<sup>th</sup> deck, 4<sup>th</sup> corridor, “A” ring.

<sup>245</sup> Mr. Stubbs was the lead author. They had tried to place the article in the *Naval Institute Proceedings* but were turned down. Mr. Bruce Stubbs comment on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>246</sup> RDML William McQuilkin, Mr. Bruce Stubbs, and CAPT Frank J. Michael, “The New Maritime Strategy: A Navy Perspective,” *The National Interest*, April 21, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-new-maritime-strategy%E2%80%94navy-perspective-12680>.

- In the display, however, they were: Emphasizing warfighting first; Sustaining forward presence; Continuing to strengthen alliances and partnerships; Assuring Global Access; Rebalancing to the Indo-Asia Pacific region; and Building the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard of the future.
- In the single-service McQuilkin-Stubbs-Michael posting, the sixth theme (or “essential function”) was presented as Build the Navy of the future.

This alternative construct and its various wordings may well have been a superior way of putting forth CS21R’s underlying ideas, but it also carried with it the danger of diluting and confusing CS21R’s message.

## “Forward, Engaged, Ready:” Yet another construct

“Forward, Engaged, Ready” was CS21R’s subtitle, but it too became an alternative construct for presenting the Navy’s strategy. Sometime after the rollout, the Navy produced and posted on line a one-page color graphic entitled “Forward, Engaged, Ready: A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower” with examples of each of those three elements listed.<sup>247</sup> The graphic replaced the “Fact Sheet,” discussed above that had earlier been posted and was later removed.

## Internal reception

### The Navy

Initial reception of the new strategy within the sea services was mixed. As was noted above, there had been general acceptance throughout the sea services that the 2007 CS21 document had been long overdue for an overhaul.

CDR Mark Seip, the Navy’s Federal Executive Fellow at the Atlantic Council, called it “strong in language and upbeat in tone,” but warned that “If Congress is going to require the level of ambition that is articulated in the strategy, then they must end sequestration and properly fund the ships and support the men and women who crew them.”<sup>248</sup> LT Roger Misso, a naval flight officer in the E2-C Hawkeye aircraft,

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<sup>247</sup> <http://www.navy.mil/local/maritime/150227-CS21RFactSheetREVISED.pdf> It remained posted as of August 2017.

<sup>248</sup> CDR Mark Seip and Alex Clayton, “Congress Must Match the Money to the Navy’s Strategy,” *Defense One*, March 20, 2015, <http://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2015/03/>

then on duty in the Pentagon, cited CS21 as an example of a successful Navy communication at the strategic level, in contrast to what he believed was a lack of Navy success in communicating when it came to innovation.<sup>249</sup>

On the other hand, CAPT Robert “Barney” Rubel (Ret.) and some of his former colleagues at the Naval War College thought the de-emphasis of the Navy’s role in maintaining the U.S. global international economic and security system was ill-advised.<sup>250</sup> Professor Peter Dombrowski cautioned that CS21R’s emphasis on warfighting might unintentionally contribute to a classic security dilemma and lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy: “American rhetoric and actions, seen within the United States as prudent, defensive, and even status quo preserving, might be interpreted as destabilizing by the rest of the world.”<sup>251</sup> Elsewhere at the Naval War College, in the Strategy Department, Professor Derek Reveron began planning to examine CS21R at his next EMC Chair Symposium on Maritime Strategy, slated for March 22–24, 2016, including reactions to its publication, its themes, and its implementation.<sup>252</sup>

CAPT Peter Haynes—a prominent writer on U.S. Navy strategy from within the service—was similarly critical. To Haynes, “Reflecting the traditional approach of the Navy’s post-Cold War strategic statements, the update takes a narrower and more operationally focused and politically expedient route than the original.” “If one were looking for an elaboration or expansion of maritime-systemic thought in the update...one would be disappointed.” Haynes went on to assert that “The Navy needs to explore the implications of the argument that...“preventing wars is as important as winning them, and far less costly,” This is not a new or novel idea, but it has never gained much institutional traction.”<sup>253</sup> Noted naval historian CDR B. J. Armstrong, reviewing CAPT Haynes’s book, sympathized with Haynes’s position when he wrote, “The recent release of the 2015 edition of the Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower, after a long gestation period, is also a positive development. However, within the document we can already see a shift away from the maritime thinking of

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congress-must-match-money-navys-strategy/108126/. CDR Seip would later be re-assigned to the OPNAV Strategy and Policy Division (N51) staff.

<sup>249</sup> LT Roger Misso, “Innovation is Initiative,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, 142 (April 2016), 46–49.

<sup>250</sup> Dean Rubel’s views on CS21R are slated for publication in a forthcoming issue of the *Naval War College Review*.

<sup>251</sup> Dr. Peter Dombrowski, “Is America’s Blue-Water Navy Doomed?” *The National Interest* (online), March 27, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/americas-blue-water-navy-doomed-12486>, accessed March 29, 2015.

<sup>252</sup> Program posted at <https://www.usnwc.edu/maritime-2016>, accessed March 13, 2016.

<sup>253</sup> Haynes, *Toward a New Maritime Strategy*, 248–251.

the 2007 edition and back toward the operational and programmatic emphasis where naval officers find comfort.”<sup>254</sup>

CAPT Haynes repeated his case at the Maritime Strategy symposium at the Naval War College in March 2016, averring that “If the 2007 version argues that the purpose of the U.S. maritime services should not be seen in terms of the *threats* to the United States, but in light of the relationship between the United States and its *system*, then the maritime services, with the 2015 version, seem poised to argue the opposite, and with it, presumably, the assumption that ‘the rest will take care of itself.’”<sup>255</sup> CDR Andrea Cameron echoed CAPT Haynes’s concerns at Newport: She granted that the 2015 strategy was perceived in the fleet as an improvement over the 2007 version, but lamented the downgrading of the latter’s emphasis on the systemic approach, the prominence it had given to humanitarian assistance/disaster response operations, and the turn from the “strategic shift showing that military assets for soft power missions could produce strategically superior outcomes. The loss of this perspective questions whether the strategy is actually strategic enough. And while it may play better in Congress who funds the services, its threat-based approach simultaneously sends messages of reassurance and concern rippling throughout the world.”<sup>256</sup>

Other reactions from within the Navy itself centered around a perceived slighting in the document of one or more elements of naval power, often elements in which the authors had particular expertise. LCDR Matthew Noland lambasted “the verbiage of the newest Maritime Strategy, which conspicuously omits rivers as part of the maritime domain.”<sup>257</sup> Joe Overton, a naval installations expert, decried the lack of mention of the Navy’s stateside shore infrastructure: “In these and other recent strategy documents, the Navy’s largest, oldest, most expensive, most resilient, and

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<sup>254</sup> B.J. Armstrong, “The Brutal Realities of Naval Strategy,” *War on the Rocks*, July 29, 2015, <http://warontherocks.com/2015/07/the-brutal-realities-of-naval-strategy/>.

<sup>255</sup> CAPT Peter D. Haynes USN, “Reflections on the 2007 Maritime Strategy and the Future of Maritime Thinking in the U.S. Navy,” *Working Papers: Maritime Strategy EMC Chair Symposium*, (Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, March 22-24, 2016), 13-14.

<sup>256</sup> CDR Andrea H. Cameron, “A Fleet Perspective on the Maritime Strategy,” *Working Papers: Maritime Strategy EMC Chair Symposium*, 17-18. See also idem, “The Legacy of the 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami on U.S. Maritime Strategy,” Center for International Maritime Security (CIMSEC), April 1, 2016, <http://cimsec.org/legacy-2004.indian-ocean-earthquake-tsunami-maritime-strategy/23895>.

<sup>257</sup> LCDR Matthew Noland, “The Global Necessity of a Riverine Force.” *Small Wars Journal* (online), March 13, 2016, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-global-necessity-of-a-riverine-force>.

most complex operational platforms, shore installations in the United States, suffer almost total neglect.”<sup>258</sup>

Others in the Navy saw CS21R as a necessary and accepted part of the Navy landscape. An ensign writing on Navy “critical thought leaders” referred to CS21R explicitly when he wrote: “The many hours and intense work in strategic evaluation and writing that the Chief of Naval Operations’ office puts into documents like these embody a task that is an amplification of the CO’s duty: evaluating and determining the best course for not just a single ship, but the entire naval service.”<sup>259</sup>

In August 2015, Navy strategy and policy expert CDR Mark Lawrence—heading back to sea duty after a succession of important Washington assignments—used the new strategy to buttress his own arguments for the necessity of the Navy building up its international partnerships.<sup>260</sup>

## The Marine Corps

The Marine Corps was pleased with the document, although, as always, they were also focused on creating and implementing their own service-specific capstone documents, notably *Expeditionary Force 21* (EF 21), the first edition of which had been signed out by the Commandant of the Marine Corps in March 2014, and was itself undergoing revision while CS21R was being finalized.<sup>261</sup> Marine Corps civilians on the CS21R drafting team had ensured that ideas contained in EF 21 were picked up in CS21R, while at the same time setting the stage in CS21R for their own anticipated revision of EF 21.

The *Marine Corps Communication Playbook* (a monthly public affairs publication providing positions on and explanations of topics of importance to the Corps) began including a page and a half on CS21R. The write-ups tied CS21 to issues of particular USMC concern, including naval integration, anti-access/area denial (A2AD), compositing, amphibious ship numbers, and alternative employment of naval

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<sup>258</sup> J. Overton, “Shifting to Shore Power?” Center for International Maritime Security (CIMSEC), April 12, 2016, <http://cimsec.org/shifting-shore-power/24109>.

<sup>259</sup> ENS Justin L.K. Chock, “Critical-Thought Leaders Achieve Best Outcomes,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 142 (June 2016), 74-76.

<sup>260</sup> Mark Lawrence, *Tailoring the Global Network for Real Burden Sharing at Sea* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies [CSIS], August 2015).

<sup>261</sup> That document had cited the 2007 edition of *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. See Commandant of the Marine Corps General James E. Amos, *Expeditionary Force 21: Forward and Ready: Now and in the Future* (Washington, DC: Headquarters United States Marine Corps, March 4, 2014).

platforms.<sup>262</sup> In December 2015, the Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps for Combat Development and Integration, LtGen Robert Walsh (who had served on the OPNAV staff while CS21R was being drafted), commented that the Commandant had instituted a review process with his three- and four-star officers to, among other things, “better align with the concepts outlined in Expeditionary Force 21 and Cooperative Strategy 21 [sic].”<sup>263</sup> Also, the Commandant’s Strategic Initiatives Group (SIG) cited CS21R in some of its “Scouting Reports.”<sup>264</sup>

As will be discussed later in this paper, the Marines also used CS21 as a reference to urge the Navy to collaborate with them further, in the drafting of a new *Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment* concept and a revised *Naval Operations Concept* (NOC).

## The Coast Guard

Two months after publication of the revised *Cooperative Strategy*, the Commandant of the Coast Guard cited the document in his *Commandant’s Strategic Intent*.<sup>265</sup> Three months later, the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard updated their *National Fleet Plan*, to align the two documents and the guidance therein.<sup>266</sup> (This remains the chief example of CS21R driving the revision of an existing policy or strategy document).

VADM Charles Michel, the Vice Commandant, was a particular enthusiast, having participated in its development while serving as the Deputy Commandant for Operations. A few days after its release, he explained its significance to the Coast

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<sup>262</sup> This continued at least through July 2016. See, for example, *Marine Corps Communications Playbook* (Washington, DC: Office of U.S. Marine Corps Communication, May 27, 2015), available to the public on-line at <http://mcvthf.org/May%2027-2015%20Playbook.pdf>, accessed May 8, 2016.

<sup>263</sup> Lee Hudson, “USMC leaders discuss challenges, Force 2025 during first futures review,” *Inside the Navy* (March 14, 2016), 2.

<sup>264</sup> See, for example, LtCol Todd Manyx, USMC, *SIG Scouting Report for the week of 25 Jan 2016* (Washington, DC: HQMC SIG, January 25, 2016) on the Arctic.

<sup>265</sup> Admiral Paul F. Zukunft, *United States Coast Guard Commandant’s Strategic Intent: 2015-2019* (Washington, DC: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, May 29, 2015), [https://www.uscg.mil/seniorleadership/DOCS/2015\\_CCGSI.pdf](https://www.uscg.mil/seniorleadership/DOCS/2015_CCGSI.pdf)

<sup>266</sup> RDML William C. McQuilkin, Director, Strategy and Policy and RADM Peter J. Brown, Assistant Commandant for Response Policy, *The National Fleet Plan—Update* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations and United States Coast Guard, Office of the Commandant, August 2015), [http://www.navy.mil/strategic/Fleet\\_Plan\\_Final.pdf](http://www.navy.mil/strategic/Fleet_Plan_Final.pdf).

Guard on the service's official blogsite.<sup>267</sup> At the strategy symposium at the Naval War College in March 2016, he was the keynote speaker—and the only participant in the symposium who had actually played a direct major role in crafting or approving the document. In his speech he asserted that “The Cooperative Strategy is light years ahead of its predecessor document.”<sup>268</sup>

Three months after he co-signed CS21R, however, the Commandant of the Coast Guard signed out his *United States Coast Guard Cyber Strategy*, citing numerous “current governing executive directives, policies and laws,” but not CS21R, despite that document's emphasis on All Domain Access.<sup>269</sup> On the other hand, he did cite it in his July 2016 midterm report on his Strategic Intent.<sup>270</sup>

## The Secretary of the Navy

Then-Under Secretary of the Navy Robert Work had insisted while in that office that Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus sign out the document, and that in fact came to pass. This had a positive effect on at least one distinguished former naval chief of service and opinion leader: “[I]nclusion of a Preface by the Secretary of the Navy in the revised version is indicative of an enhanced political interface with the Sea Services. It therefore adds to the credibility that the new strategy...is fiscally supportable.”<sup>271</sup>

## External reception

Reactions to CS21R outside the sea services varied.

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<sup>267</sup> VADM Charles Michel, Coast Guard Deputy Commandant for Operations, “Forward, Engaged and Ready: A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower,” *Coast Guard All Hands*, March 18, 2015, accessed 12 Jun 2017. <http://allhands.coastguard.dodlive.mil/2015/03/18/forward-engaged-and-ready-a-cooperative-strategy-for-21st-century-seapower/>.

<sup>268</sup> Peter M. Swartz (CNA) notes on VADM Michel speech, March 23, 2016.

<sup>269</sup> Admiral Paul F. Zukunft USCG, *United States Coast Guard Cyber Strategy* (Washington, DC: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, June 2015). This lack of mention of CS21R echoes the similar void in earlier U.S. Coast Guard strategy documents, as noted earlier in the text.

<sup>270</sup> Admiral Paul F. Zukunft USCG, *United States Coast Guard Commandant's Strategic Intent: 2015-2019: Mid-Term Report* (Washington, DC: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, July 1, 2016), <https://www.uscg.mil/seniorleadership/DOCS/midterm.pdf>.

<sup>271</sup> ADM Nirma Verma, IN (Ret.), “A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower, An Indian Perspective,” *Working Papers: Maritime Strategy EMC Chair Symposium*, 6.

## The Congress

Influential members of Congress had long urged the Navy to focus greater attention on strategy. Representative Randy Forbes (R-VA), chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, had written to CNO ADM Greenert in October 2014 about what he termed “the deficit in strategic thinking” in the Navy—a shortfall the congressman attributed to institutional restrictions like the Goldwater-Nichols Act.<sup>272</sup>

Forbes, however, immediately praised CS21R upon its publication, declaring it “light years ahead” of the 2007 document. He lauded the fact that the new strategy mentioned rivals and potential adversaries by name, particularly China: “They were pretty straightforward talking about the challenge China would pose,” Forbes said. “That’s something if you leave out of our maritime strategy, it almost becomes worthless”. He would, however, have liked to have seen the industrial base given some attention, and a force structure assessment specifically for the Navy.<sup>273</sup>

On the other hand, long-time Library of Congress (LOC) Congressional Research Service (CRS) naval analyst Ronald O’Rourke did not find CS21R significant, relevant, or useful enough to cite in his routinely updated and widely influential comprehensive reports on U.S. Navy force structure and shipbuilding plans—documents that otherwise abound in discussion of strategy issues and citations of strategy references.<sup>274</sup> Mr. O’Rourke had not heard or read enough discussion of the strategy by any of his Navy interlocutors—including the CNO—or by members of Congress or their staffs, to merit attention in his report (unlike its predecessor, CS21, which had attracted criticism on Capitol Hill years before).<sup>275</sup> He did, however, cite—and reprint—the CNO’s recent use in his testimony of the ten defense missions laid out in the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>272</sup>Quoted in Sam LaGrone, “Randy Forbes to CNO Greenert: ‘The Navy Desperately Needs A Strategy,’” *USNI News*, October 1, 2014, <http://news.usni.org/2014/10/01/randy-forbes-cno-greenert-navy-desperately-needs-strategy>.

<sup>273</sup> Sam LaGrone, “Rep. Forbes: New U.S. Maritime Strategy Revision ‘Light Years Ahead’ of 2007 Original,” *USNI News*, March 30, 2015.

<sup>274</sup> See, for example, Ronald O’Rourke, *Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans: Background and Issues for Congress*. CRS Report RL 32665 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, May 23, 2016).

<sup>275</sup> Peter M. Swartz telephone interview with Ronald O’Rourke, August 8, 2016.

<sup>276</sup> O’Rourke, *Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans*, 24. Recall that the CNO had not wanted CS21R itself to use those missions, resulting in enunciation of a seven-mission typology in that document.

## American naval analysts

CS21R immediately attracted the attention of the nation's legion of naval thinkers, commentators and consultants. Probably the first out of the box was Joshua Tallis, a Washington, DC naval analyst who would soon take a position at CNA. In a post on the Center for International Maritime Security (CIMSEC) blogsite on the day that CS21R was released, Tallis highlighted the document's "greater geographic specificity, the expansion of interest in securing the cyber realm, and the inclusion of a fifth pillar (all domain access) in the sea services' conception of what seapower means." He viewed the strategy as "not so much a revision as a replacement," "the result being a document distinctly different in both tone and content."<sup>277</sup>

Tallis was almost immediately followed by highly experienced naval strategic thinkers Bryan McGrath and Bryan Clark, who generally praised the document for recognizing the changes that had occurred in the world since 2007, and for its utility as a communications tool for the Navy, providing a "more hard-edged, clear-eyed vision than the document it replaces." They noted four main ideas that CNO ADM Greenert had introduced into U.S. maritime strategy: Elevation of electro-magnetic spectrum operations, squeezing more forward presence from a force unlikely to grow, highlighting ensuring access as the main naval contribution to the joint force, and emphasizing the need for greater flexibility, adaptability, and modularity in the sea services. They criticized the strategy, however, for not adequately balancing ends, ways and means, and for a lack of clear priorities among maritime functions. Like Congressman Forbes, they also took the strategy to task for not including the need for a robust naval and maritime industrial base.<sup>278</sup>

McGrath later worried that naming (Chinese) names might stoke "Beijing's perception of encirclement" and serve as a justification for both the build-up and modernization of naval forces and the continuing importance of the Chinese counter-intervention strategy."<sup>279</sup> Later still, he, Dr. Seth Cropsey, and Timothy A. Walton noticed

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<sup>277</sup> Joshua Tallis, "The New U.S. Maritime Strategy," Center for International Maritime Security, March 13, 2015, <http://cimsec.org/new-us-maritime-strategy/15507>.

<sup>278</sup> Bryan McGrath and Bryan Clark, "The New Maritime Strategy: It's Tricky to Balance Ends, Ways and Means," *War on the Rocks*, March 16, 2015, [warontherocks.com/2015/03/the-new-maritime-strategy-its-tricky-to-balance-ends-ways-and-means/](http://warontherocks.com/2015/03/the-new-maritime-strategy-its-tricky-to-balance-ends-ways-and-means/). According to the contributors blurb, "Bryan McGrath was the primary author of the 2007 maritime strategy that preceded this new work. Bryan Clark previously served as a close advisor to the Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Jonathan Greenert, and played a role in shaping some of the ideas in the strategy."

<sup>279</sup> Bryan McGrath, "America's New Maritime Strategy: How Will China Respond?" *The National Interest*, April 10, 2015, <http://www.nationalinterest.org/blog/americas-new-maritime-strategy-how-will-china-respond-12592>, accessed September 15, 2015.

disapprovingly that the new strategy had eliminated the 2007 document's formal acknowledgement that the U.S. permanently maintained significant naval combat power forward in two regions (or hubs)—the Arabian Gulf/Indian Ocean region and the Western Pacific.<sup>280</sup>

At the maritime strategy conference in Newport in March 2016, McGrath repeated his criticism of ignoring the importance of the industrial base (for which he chastised himself as well, for its earlier omission in the 2007 strategy document that he had authored a great deal of).<sup>281</sup> He also repeated the several themes of his earlier collaboration with Bryan Clark; urged creation of a “classified strategy for American Seapower in an age of great power contention;” and noted that “CNO level interest and involvement is key. We had it in 2007, they did not in 2015.”<sup>282</sup>

Dr. Cropsey had earlier posted his own critique of the new maritime strategy statement in *The Weekly Standard*, commenting approvingly that “while the recently published revised strategy is a significant improvement over its predecessor, it has a long and very important way to go.” Cropsey discussed what he believed that improvement entailed, but then faulted the strategy for being “less clear about what to do with whatever ships it actually possesses in the face of multiplying threats.” Cropsey saw the Navy’s thinking as constrained by the policies of an administration that he personally did not support, and was concerned that “The U.S. sea services’ revised strategy does not present alternate strategies, let alone choose among them.”<sup>283</sup>

Retired Navy officer, naval historian, and prolific naval policy blogger Steve Wills criticized the strategy for not being threat-based enough; for not being supported by a well-defined force structure requirement—given the hybrid nature of the threat; and for giving short shrift to the role of the Congress in naval affairs. He predicted

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<sup>280</sup> Seth Cropsey, Bryan G. McGrath, and Timothy A. Walton, *Sharpening the Spear: The Carrier, the Joint Force, and High-End Conflict* (Washington, DC: Hudson Institute, 2015), 93. As SECNAV John Lehman’s Deputy Undersecretary, Dr. Cropsey had been an exponent of the Navy’s *Maritime Strategy* during the 1980s.

<sup>281</sup> Ignoring the importance of the industrial base has been endemic in modern U.S. Navy capstone documents. See Swartz with Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1970–2010)*, vol I, 47.

<sup>282</sup> Bryan McGrath, “Developing Maritime Strategy,” *Working Papers: Maritime Strategy EMC Chair Symposium*, 15–16.

<sup>283</sup> Seth Cropsey, “The New Naval Strategy: A Mixed Bag,” *The Weekly Standard* blog, March 23, 2015, <http://www.weeklystandard.com/the-new-naval-strategy-a-mixed-bag/article/896315>.

that the document was “unlikely to have a long service life, so maritime security planners should perhaps busy themselves with the next volume.”<sup>284</sup>

A few months later, retired U.S. Coast Guard Captain, OPNAV staff officer, and National War College strategy professor Dr. Robert Watts weighed in on the pages of *Proceedings*. Watts was disappointed because in his view, CS21R (like CS21 before it) continued to follow what he regarded as outmoded “Mahanian” concepts, especially that of the “capital ship,” and gave too short shrift to what he saw as more urgent and important requirements of irregular warfare, given the “non-traditional threats” that continued to plague the U.S.<sup>285</sup>

CAPT Peter M. Swartz, (Ret.), a co-author of this paper, published a book chapter in 2016 entitled “American Naval Policy, Strategy, Plans, and Operations in the Second Decade of the Twenty-First Century.”<sup>286</sup> While not a direct critique of CS21R, it offered his alternative—and recommended—way of presenting similar subject matter, using the framework of the U.S. Navy’s successful *Maritime Strategy* documents of the 1980s, in place of the constructs used in CS21R.

## International reactions

### Friends and allies

Overseas, the commentary was significant and varied, as nationals of allied and friendly countries tried hard to understand the capabilities and intentions of their most significant naval partner.

Preeminent British naval affairs academic Dr. Geoffrey Till repeatedly noted the strategy’s more “muscular” tone, but took the document’s authors to task for not

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<sup>284</sup> Steve Wills, “The New U.S. Maritime Strategy: A Glass Half Empty,” *Information Dissemination* blog, March 19, 2015, <http://www.informationdissemination.net/2015/03/the-new-us-navy-maritime-strategy-glass.html>.

<sup>285</sup> Captain R.B. Watts, USCG (Ret.), “Advocating Naval Heresy,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 141 (June 2015) For an authoritative rebuttal of some of his ideas, see Mr. Bruce B. Stubbs, “Rebuttal to ‘Advocating Naval Heresy’ by Captain R.B. Watts, USCG (Ret.) USNI *Proceedings*, June 2015,” U.S. Naval Institute blog (October 7, 2015), <https://blog.usni.org/2015/10/07/rebuttaltoadvocatingnavalheresy-stubbs>. Note that while CAPT Watts tied his criticism of U.S. Navy strategy and policy to a criticism of CS21R, Mr. Stubbs never mentioned that document in his riposte, nor did he use its vocabulary or typologies.

<sup>286</sup> In Joachim Krause and Sebastian Bruns, eds., *Routledge Handbook of Naval Strategy and Security* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

making a more cogent and detailed case for the policy of forward naval presence they espoused, and for not emphasizing more the utility of maritime armed forces for naval diplomacy.<sup>287</sup> Researcher Jan Stockbruegger, at Cardiff University in Wales, saw the strategy as indicating a “significant realist shift in U.S. strategic thinking about the oceans,” noting that it “emphasizes new military threats and geopolitical challenges” and “constructs a realist future for the oceans driven by narrow security interests and great power rivalry.”<sup>288</sup>

German naval strategy expert Dr. Sebastian Bruns saw the “absence of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) as a core strategic capability” as a “potentially contentious point” in Germany.<sup>289</sup> Indian maritime security affairs specialist Abhijit Singh was generally positive, and found “Washington’s willingness to articulate a strategy that identifies Chinese assertiveness as a threat” to be “most refreshing.”<sup>290</sup> Swedish naval specialists Lieutenant Commander Stefan Lundqvist and Professor J. J. Widen were also positive, but criticized the document for ignoring the Baltic Sea region, given Russia’s increasingly challenging conduct. They called for a more permanent U.S. Navy presence there.<sup>291</sup>

Three distinguished senior foreign naval veterans discussed the new Maritime Strategy at the conference on that subject convened at the Naval War College a year after it had been published. Former Indian Navy Chief of Naval Staff ADM Nirma Verma, viewing CS21R in the context of India’s own maritime security strategy, saw the U.S. document as having a “workable approach towards ushering in a global cooperative maritime security mechanism,” but cautioned that “there is a need for patience and immediate results should not be expected.”<sup>292</sup> Former Commander of

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<sup>287</sup> Geoffrey Till, “The New U.S. Maritime Strategy: Another View from Outside,” *Naval War College Review* 68 (Autumn 2015), 34–45. As he noted in his review, his views had earlier been sought by CS21R’s drafters. He had met with them in the Pentagon, and had pulled no punches in his advice. Recollection of CNA analyst Peter M. Swartz, who was present at the meeting. See also Till’s *The New U.S. Maritime Strategy: Why It Matters*. RSIS Commentary, No. 095 (Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, April 21, 2015), <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/CO15095.pdf>.

<sup>288</sup> Jan Stockbruegger, “Liberal Cooperation vs. Great Power Rivalry? How the New U.S. Seapower Strategy Shapes World Order,” Piracy-Studies.org, <http://piracy-studies.org/liberal-cooperation-vs-great-power-rivalry-how-the-new-u-s-seapower-strategy-shapes-world-order/>.

<sup>289</sup> Sebastian Bruns “The Cooperative Strategy (CS-21/CS21R): A View from Germany,” Center for International Maritime Security, May 27, 2015.

<sup>290</sup> Abhijit Singh, *The New U.S. Maritime Strategy—Implications for ‘Maritime Asia*. PacNet No. 24 (Honolulu: CSIS Pacific Forum, April 14, 2015).

<sup>291</sup> Stefan Lundqvist and J.J. Widen, “The New U.S. Maritime Strategy,” *The RUSI Journal* 160 (December 2015), 42–48.

<sup>292</sup> Verma, “A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower, An Indian Perspective,” 5–6.

the Colombian Navy ADM Guillermo E. Barrera Hurtado focused approvingly on CS21R's addressing the need to combat transnational criminal organizations (TCOs).<sup>293</sup> Commodore Lee Cordner, retired from the Royal Australian Navy after 33 years of service, asserted that the strategy was a "powerful declaratory statement" written in "clear, simple language," but worried that it contained several inherent risks, including "unrequited expectations," the many challenges to achieving a "global network of navies," a paucity of available naval platforms, uncertainty as to how to achieve "all-domain access," and concerns regarding "funding and related U.S. political commitment."<sup>294</sup>

## China

Several Chinese naval and defense experts commented on the strategy in Chinese media. The commentary was notably hostile.

Typical responses were: "Makes groundless accusations against China's legitimate actions;" "represents a Cold War mentality;" "the new US strategies . . . are moves against China;" "the intentions of the United States to maintain its maritime hegemony have not been reduced in the slightest;" "a strategy to ask for military budget and a strategy to exaggerate China threat;" "similar to the U.S. Navy's global offensive model under the Reagan era;" "obviously targeted at China;" and "'All-Domain-Access' capability means that the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard want to dominate in all six domains of air, sea, land, space, cyberspace, and electromagnetic spectrum in the future."<sup>295</sup>

## Other potential adversaries

In sharp contrast to the Chinese reaction, however, the media response from Russians, Iranians and North Koreans was far more muted. None mentioned CS21R by name, and few noted that the U.S. Navy and the other sea services even had such a strategy.<sup>296</sup> Iranian Revolutionary Guard Brigadier General Ali Fawzi was quoted in October 2015 as crediting the IRGC Navy with having "caused our enemies to voice

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<sup>293</sup> Admiral Guillermo E. Barrera Hurtado, ARC (Ret.), "Western Hemisphere Perspective on Maritime Strategy," *Working Papers: Maritime Strategy EMC Chair Symposium*, 7-8.

<sup>294</sup> CDRE Lee Cordner, RAN (Ret.), "Risks, Rhetoric and Reality: United States Maritime Strategy 2015 and Beyond," *Working Papers: Maritime Strategy EMC Chair Symposium*, 7-8.

<sup>295</sup> From a CNA search of available open-source literature

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*

the need to change their naval strategy.”<sup>297</sup> There were various Iranian references, however, to the U.S. *National Security Strategy* that had been released just a month before CS21R, and to the Pentagon’s 2014 QDR.

## The effort tapers off

The initial roll-out effort had been intense. The high-visibility roll-out ceremony went as planned; press releases were released; key members of Congress and their staffs were briefed; and individual hard copies of the document were distributed on Capitol Hill. Foreign attaches in Washington had the document’s contents carefully explained to them, including private sessions with key allied attaches as well as the Chinese. A copy of the strategy was mailed to every command and activity in the Navy, and a soft copy was sent to key U.S. defense and naval attaches overseas. The Navy Lesson Learned Program stocked hundreds of hard copies.

The deep collaboration among OPNAV N51, CHINFO and OLA continued for a month or two after the roll-out, but then began to dissipate. Many of the venues mandated in the March Campaign Plan were not actually ever used. Besides the initial flag officer briefings, few briefing teams (as originally planned) were constituted and deployed to engage at service colleges, think tanks, or similar venues.<sup>298</sup> The strategy was briefed at some routine scheduled events during spring 2015—NFOSES, the Sea-Air-Space exposition, the Current Strategy Forum—but at few specially convened ones. Flag officers continued to make speeches during “Fleet Weeks,” “Navy Weeks,” port visits, and air shows, but they seldom had a CS21R theme.<sup>299</sup> No institution existed to hold their feet to the CS21R fire.<sup>300</sup>

The briefing and dissemination effort fell off. Many of the “recurring articles, blog posts (CNO, Navy Live), and videos from Fleet leadership on CS21R themes” called for in the March Campaign Plan didn’t occur. By August 2016, N51 was briefing CS21R to new classes of OPNAV action officers, new annual FEF cohorts, and newly

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<sup>297</sup> *AEI Iran Tracker*, October 7, 2015, <http://www.irantracker.org/iran-news-round-october-7-2015>.

<sup>298</sup> Peter Swartz interview with Mr. Bruce Stubbs, November 5, 2015; subsequent interviews with N51 action officers, July 20, 2016.

<sup>299</sup> Utilizing these venues had been a key planned segment in the Campaign Plan for the April–November 2015 time period.

<sup>300</sup> In contrast, records show that between October 1983 and September 1984 (a year after it was first briefed), OP-06 (now N3/N5) officers were briefing *The Maritime Strategy* over 100 times, with only one-third of those briefings being delivered by the document’s principal drafter. Peter Swartz files.

reporting foreign attaches, but to few others. And those briefings were often as part of larger N51 briefing programs covering a variety of other topics, with no pride of place afforded to CS21R. Few others in the Navy besides N51 were briefing the strategy at all.<sup>301</sup>

Still, CS21R continued to have a certain advocacy and senior readership. As noted above, VADM Foggo continued to mention it in articles, as did OPNAV civilian official Mrs. Margaret Palmieri. Some important naval commentators still occasionally invoked it.<sup>302</sup> Naval thinkers and writers far from Washington who wished to understand and use guidance from Washington still referred to it on occasion.<sup>303</sup> It still lived and was used in places, although occasionally its message was garbled.<sup>304</sup>

## Unused media

Some media venues were not utilized to disseminate CS21R: Unlike the original 2007 CS21 document, the 2015 version was not reprinted in the *Marine Corps Gazette*, the *Naval War College Review*, or the *Navy Program Guide* distributed on Capitol Hill and elsewhere. CHINFO's flagship communication with the Sailors of the Fleet, the annual *All Hands* "O+O" "Owners and Operators Manual" for 2015, made no mention of CS21R either.<sup>305</sup>

## Tracking the responses

N51 action officer Travis Moths was charged with tracking and summarizing media reactions to CS21R and reporting his findings up the chain. Moths received reports from CHINFO on the number of hits that CS21R received on Navy websites, including the origins of those hits (often from China). He accumulated some 40 or so items in

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<sup>301</sup> Peter M. Swartz interview with Mr. Bruce Stubbs, July 20, 2016.

<sup>302</sup> See, for example, Prof. Peter Dombrowski's discussion of CS21R's treatment of naval adversaries in "Peer Competition: USN Views on Russian Naval Activity," *Jane's Naval International*, August 18, 2016, [www.ihs.com](http://www.ihs.com).

<sup>303</sup> See for example, its use by Stephan Lopic and Stephanie Hszieh in "Sharing Information Strengthens Maritime Partnerships," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* (August 2016), 78-80.

<sup>304</sup> CDR Daryk Zirkle cited the "four essential functions it outlines (forward presence, maritime security, power projection, and deterrence) [sic]" in his "Sailing into the Gray Zone," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* (September 2016), 10.

<sup>305</sup> "All Hands: Owners and Operators Manual," *U.S. Navy*, January 2015, accessed June 12, 2017. [http://www.navy.mil/ah\\_online/archpdf/ah201501.pdf](http://www.navy.mil/ah_online/archpdf/ah201501.pdf).

the few months following release of the documents. Commentary after that, he reported, all but ceased.<sup>306</sup>

## Taking on the critics

Despite the plethora of initial written commentary on CS21R, some of it critical, the Navy did not often respond, nor use them as opportunities to press home its points and reach a wider audience. A notable exception was Mr. Bruce Stubbs's rebuttal of Prof. Robert Watts's critique (noted earlier).<sup>307</sup> Watts had taken the Navy's strategists to task for being too "Mahanian" and not paying enough attention to non-traditional threats, while Stubbs countered with a rationale for current U.S. Navy force structure, based on contemporary geopolitical realities.

## Assessing CS21R

There was no formal post-rollout Navy assessment phase for CS21R.<sup>308</sup> In this it was typical of previous Navy capstone documents:<sup>309</sup> The 2007 CS21 itself had had two separate assessment processes built into its design, but they petered out during execution and had little effect.<sup>310</sup> What products may have come of that effort were not used by the CS21R drafting teams, to our knowledge.

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<sup>306</sup> Peter Swartz interview with Travis Moths (N51), July 20, 2016.

<sup>307</sup> Mr. Bruce Stubbs, "Rebuttal" (blog). Contrast this with the spirited debate among critics of the 1980s Maritime Strategy and its proponents in Peter M. Swartz, "The Maritime Strategy Debates: A Bibliographic Guide to the Renaissance of U.S. Naval Strategic Thinking in the 1980s" in John B. Hattendorf, ed., *The Evolution of the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy, 1977-1986*. Newport Paper #19 (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2004). See especially RADM William Pendley's responses to Col John Collins, pp. 208 and 214; and CAPT Linton F. Brooks's counter to Professor John Mearsheimer, p. 218. RADM Pendley at the time was the Navy's Director for Strategy, Plans, and Policy (N51 in 2016's parlance), while CAPT Brooks had been his deputy.

<sup>308</sup> This seems to be an endemic issue in the U.S. defense establishment, not just the Navy. As CNA analyst Dr. Margaret Polski noted, "there is a tendency in the strategy community to focus on products and primers rather than analysis, vision, or effective processes." Margaret M. Polski, "Strategy 2.0: The Next Generation," *Joint Force Quarterly* 81 (2d Quarter 2016), 21.

<sup>309</sup> On determining the "success" of Navy strategies, see Swartz with Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts*. On measuring their effectiveness, see Swartz, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategy, Policy, Vision and Concept Documents*, 57.

<sup>310</sup> Swartz with Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (2001-2010)*, 178, 186.

## New steps

During and after the release of CS21R in March 2015, a number of other national-level, tri-service, bi-service, and Navy maritime conceptual efforts were also under way or completed and released, aligned more or less with CS21R—or not at all.<sup>311</sup> This continuing stream of publications as often distracted readers from the strategy as supported it, diluting the influence that CS21R was supposed to achieve as the Navy’s most authoritative “capstone” document.

### The “Classified Annex”

The successive TORs for creating CS21R had all called for a Navy-only “Secret Supplement” or “Classified Annex.” RADM Donegan (N3/N5) testified to that effect on Capitol Hill.<sup>312</sup> The N51 Fact Sheet produced for the CS21R launch stated that the classified annex “will integrate existing efforts in expanding our warfighting capability in the demanding global environment that we see today . . . [the annex] will also exploit innovation and is expected to further inform the budget and POM [Program Objective Memorandum] cycle.”<sup>313</sup>

OPNAV N513 was given responsibility for drafting and coordination, under a new branch head, CAPT Robert Hein, and, with CS21R finally published, began its work.<sup>314</sup> Along the way, the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard joined the drafting effort.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> In April 2016, the U.S. Navy website listed and linked to some 15 unclassified “Strategic Documents.” Posted at <http://www.navy.mil/StrategicDocs.asp>.

<sup>312</sup> Testimony of RADM Kevin M. Donegan, *Naval Cooperative Strategy*, U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, and Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, March 18, 2015, accessed October 8, 2015, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-114hhr94225/pdf/CHRG-114hhr94225.pdf>.

<sup>313</sup> N51, “Fact Sheet: A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower: Forward, Engaged, Ready,” n.d., 2.

<sup>314</sup> CAPT Hein, a surface warfare officer post-major command with extensive OPNAV experience, reported to OPNAV N51 in July 2015, after a year’s immersion in contemporary U.S. defense policy and strategy issues as the Navy’s Federal Executive Fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, DC.

<sup>315</sup> As of September 2017, no announcement had been made that the Classified Annex had been published.

## Maritime strategy conferences

As noted earlier, CNO ADM Greenert regarded the Current Strategy Forum of June 2014 at the Naval War College to have been a great success and a major milestone in the revitalization of Navy strategy. Accordingly, he mandated that a series of subsequent conferences be convened, all around the Navy, examining various facets of maritime strategy.

The first of these was a two-day conference on “Future Navy Strategy,” conceptualized, organized and managed by N51 and CNA/CSS at CNA’s new headquarters spaces in Arlington, Virginia in April 2015, a month after CS21R had been released and while work was commencing on the “Classified Annex.” The conference had both classified and unclassified sessions.<sup>316</sup>

This conference was followed in 2015 by the annual Current Strategy Forum convened in June by the Naval War College, and a Cooperative Strategy Forum for Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet ADM Scott Swift, held in December at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu, Hawaii and attended by more than 100 representatives from 10 partner nations.<sup>317</sup> In April 2016, a similar Cooperative Strategy Forum was cosponsored by OPNAV N3/N5 VADM John Aquilino and Commander, U.S. Sixth Fleet VADM Foggo in Naples, Italy, attended by 55 senior naval officers representing 19 navies in the European area.<sup>318</sup> The latter two conferences were heavily supported in their conceptualization and organization by CNA.<sup>319</sup>

Thus the strategic momentum achieved with the publication of CS21R was continued through the following year or so. The various Navy sponsors were well pleased with the Future Strategy and Cooperative Strategy forums, and plans were underway in

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<sup>316</sup> CNA analysts Dr. Afshon Ostovar and Ms. Mary Ellen Connell led this effort at CNA. Much of the panel facilitation was provided by CNA managers and analysts, including CNA Vice President and Strategic Studies Director Dr. Eric Thompson, and Senior Fellow RADM Michael McDevitt (Ret.).

<sup>317</sup> ADM Swift had previously been the director of the OPNAV Staff, and, as such, had chaired the Navy Strategic Enterprise Strategy Oversight Group (SOG). He had been and remained a strong proponent of the CNO’s strategy revitalization initiatives, and had volunteered to sponsor the conference.

<sup>318</sup> COMSIXTHFLT VADM Foggo’s interest in and influence on CS21R had been strong in his previous assignment as OPNAV N3/N5B. He retained that interest when he went to Europe.

<sup>319</sup> Principal CNA contributors to the Naples forum were Dr. Eric Thompson, Alexander Alden, and Mary Ellen Connell.

the summer of 2016 to continue holding them through at least 2017, supported by CNA.

On the other hand, at neither Cooperative Strategy Forum was CS21R itself mentioned, briefed, or discussed in any significant way.

## The *Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment* concept

In June 2015, the Navy and Marine Corps leadership tasked an integrated team from the Navy Warfare Development Command (NWDC) and the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory (MCWL) to develop a classified concept for future “Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment,” due to their successors for approval in June 2016. A formal planning order was issued in August 2015. The concept had significant Marine Corps interest and “falls in line with ‘A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower.’”<sup>320</sup> It was signed out by the Commandant and CNO as a classified document on February 27, 2017.<sup>321</sup> A principal Marine drafter was John Berry, who ensured continuity of purpose and content for the Marine Corps, having helped craft CS21, CS21R, and other Navy–Marine Corps capstone documents.<sup>322</sup>

## More national-level assessments and strategies

A month after CS21R was published, the Department of Defense sent its annual report to the Congress on military and security developments involving the People’s Republic of China.<sup>323</sup> In June 2015, a new National Military Strategy was released by outgoing Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen Martin Dempsey, four years after his predecessor ADM Michael Mullen had released the previous version. Its full title was *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2015: The United*

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<sup>320</sup> Lee Hudson, “Navy, USMC developing concept for littoral ops in a contested environment,” *Inside the Navy*, November 30, 2015, 3.

<sup>321</sup> See Concepts Branch, Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory/Futures Directorate, “Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment: Developing a New Naval Operating Concept,” *Marine Corps Gazette* (February 2016), 6–9. See also LtGen Robert S. Walsh USMC, MARADMIN message 233/17 “Dissemination of Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment,” May 15, 2017.

<sup>322</sup> John Berry e-mail to Peter Swartz, August 22, 2016.

<sup>323</sup> *Annual Report to the Congress on Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2015* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, April 2015).

*States Military's Contribution to National Security*.<sup>324</sup> It discussed the use by the nation of the “Joint Force,” of which the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard were components. Two months later, the Defense Department’s unclassified *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy* was released.<sup>325</sup>

While in some sense complementing the message of CS21R, the release of these three documents were yet more distractions from it, however, diluting its message and effect. None—not even the *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy*—mentioned CS21R. This again illustrated the difficulty of coordinating the release of documents by the Navy to achieve the widest and greatest effects, while remaining abreast of current national policy, in the face of the constant release of national-level documents on timelines seldom shared with or capable of being influenced by the Navy.

Subsequent national-level documents occasionally cited CS21R, including the Joint Operating Environment (JOE) 2035.<sup>326</sup> The citation attributed CS21R to the U.S. Navy, however, not all three sea services.

## CNO ADM Greenert’s continued output

CS21R did not prove to be the sole capstone publication of ADM Greenert’s tour as CNO. Besides putting forth the tenets of CS21R, he had other ideas and projects on his agenda that came to fruition as he was getting ready to leave office.

In July 2015, he released his last *Navigation Plan*.<sup>327</sup> In it he cited the long-standing “three tenets” that he had introduced four years earlier in his *Sailing Directions*. He also, however, cited CS21R (his earlier *Navigation Plans* had not), and he used its “five functions of the Navy” construct. In addition, he elaborated on the emphasis that CS21R had placed on forward naval presence. Much of the document, however, keyed off the “six programmatic priorities” that he had introduced in the previous

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<sup>324</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2015: The United States Military's Contribution to National Security* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, June 2015), [http://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Publications/2015\\_National\\_Military\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Publications/2015_National_Military_Strategy.pdf).

<sup>325</sup> *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, August 2015), accessed 12 Jun 2017. [http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/NDAA%20A-P\\_Maritime\\_Security\\_Strategy-08142015-1300-FINALFORMAT.PDF](http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/NDAA%20A-P_Maritime_Security_Strategy-08142015-1300-FINALFORMAT.PDF).

<sup>326</sup> *The Joint Force in a Contested and Disordered World* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, July 14, 2016).

<sup>327</sup> Admiral Jonathan Greenert, *CNO's Navigation Plan: 2016–2020*. (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, July 2015).

year's *Navigation Plan*. This typology was unlike any of those in CS21R and also unlike OPNAV N51's alternate "six themes."

At the very end of his term, ADM Greenert signed out *How We Fight: Handbook for the Naval Warfighter*, in which naval attributes were parsed and described differently from the typologies and definitions used in CS21R. *How We Fight* cited both the 2007 *Cooperative Strategy* as well as the 2015 document (referred to, however, only by its sub-title, *Forward, Engaged, Ready*). CS21's "five essential functions" are listed, but are titled "Navy essential functions," and are also referred to as "core capabilities," "enduring missions," and "Navy strategic concepts."<sup>328</sup> *How We Fight* also discusses seven "strategic attributes of naval forces" and six "strategic imperatives."

And in September 2015, the U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* published the last of the five articles that he signed or co-signed for that journal during his term as CNO, on ethics and leadership.<sup>329</sup>

## Office of Naval Intelligence reports

Following publication of CS21R, the U.S. Navy's Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) published two widely-disseminated unclassified reports: *The PLA Navy: New Capabilities and Missions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*; and *The Russian Navy: A Historic Transition*.<sup>330</sup> The messages of these two publications complemented that of CS21R. These useful documents did not refer to CS21R, however, nor to its judgments on those two nations, missing an opportunity to build and sustain a coherent and mutually reinforcing Navy message.

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<sup>328</sup> *How We Fight: Handbook for the Naval Warfighter* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, n.d. [published in 2015]), 142.

<sup>329</sup> Admiral Jonathan Greenert, "The Moral Component of Leadership," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 141 (September 2015), 16–20.

<sup>330</sup> *The PLA Navy: New Capabilities and Missions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Washington, DC: Office of Naval Intelligence, April 2015), <http://www.oni.navy.mil/Intelligence-Community/China>; and *The Russian Navy: A Historic Transition* (Washington, DC: Office of Naval Intelligence, December 2015), <http://www.oni.navy.mil/Intelligence-Community/Russia>.

## New CNO ADM Richardson and the *Navy Strategic Plan (NSP-18)*

Upon assuming the office of CNO in September 2015, ADM John Richardson directed the drafting of a new classified single-service *Navy Strategic Plan for Program Objective Memorandum 2018 (NSP-18)*, to be nested under CS21 and his then-forthcoming *Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority*. NSP-18 was to inform the development of the Navy's Program Objective Memorandum 18 (POM 18). OPNAV N513 was given responsibility for rapidly drafting and coordinating this document, which was published in December 2015.<sup>331</sup> Less than a year later, ADM Richardson also directed that a similar document be drafted by N51 for POM 19, targeted for September 2016 publication. This document morphed into the classified CNO Guidance (CNOG) for POM-19, published in October 2016.<sup>332</sup>

### Navy Goals and Objectives for FY 2016

On December 15, 2015, Secretary Mabus, CNO ADM Richardson and CMC Gen Neller signed out the Department of the Navy's goals and objectives for the current fiscal year, just ending its first quarter. This two-page document was parsed in accordance with the Secretary's oft-repeated "4P's" typology of *People, Platforms, Power* and *Partnerships*. It overlapped to some extent with the themes of CS21R, especially in regard to *Partnerships*, but made no mention of the CS21R document (nor any other).<sup>333</sup>

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<sup>331</sup>ADM John Richardson, *Navy Strategic Plan for Program Objective Memorandum 2018 (SECRET)*, (Washington, DC: Office of the CNO, December 2015). CAPT Robert N. Hein, the new head of the Navy's strategy branch (OPNAV N513) was the lead drafter.

<sup>332</sup> ADM John Richardson, *Chief of Naval Operations Guidance for Development of Program Objective Memorandum 2019 (CNOG-19)* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, October 12, 2016)

<sup>333</sup> General Robert B. Neller, Admiral John M. Richardson, Secretary Ray Mabus, *Memorandum for Distribution: Department of the Navy (DON) Goals and Objectives for Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16)* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, December 15, 2015), [http://www.navy.mil/strategic/DON\\_Goals\\_and\\_Objectives\\_FY16.pdf](http://www.navy.mil/strategic/DON_Goals_and_Objectives_FY16.pdf).

## CNO ADM Richardson and *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority*

After beginning his term as CNO in September 2015, ADM John Richardson directed the drafting of a new single-service U.S. Navy document: *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority*. (In a previous tour, as Commander, Submarine Forces, he had commissioned and used a *Design for Undersea Warfare* as a roadmap). *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority* was drafted by the new CNO and his special assistants, and promulgated to the Navy as “Version 1.0” in January 2016, comprising eight pages.<sup>334</sup> The Design was later published in the *Naval War College Review* as well.<sup>335</sup>

It described its initiatives as “initial steps along a future course to achieve the aims articulated in the revised *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower (CS21R)* in this new environment.” The picture on its cover was adapted from the picture on the inside front cover of CS21.

Accordingly, U.S. Navy leaders began to re-focus on carrying out the *Design*, rather than implementing CS21R: In March 2016, VADM Kevin Donegan, who as a RADM and DCNO in OPNAV had shepherded the completion of the revised CS21, posted a derivative “Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority in the 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet.”<sup>336</sup> Soon thereafter, the President of the Naval War College, RADM P. Gardner Howe III, briefly described his own command’s implementation of the *Design*.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> ADM John M. Richardson, *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority*. (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, January 2016). The document does include and mention the Marine Corps once. In a critique posted as a blog, retired U.S. Coast Guard officer Chuck Hill noted that the Coast Guard was nowhere mentioned in the document, and made a series of suggestions for closer U.S. Navy–U.S. Coast Guard relations: <http://cimsec.org/design-maintaining-maritime-superiority-coasties-view/21098>.

<sup>335</sup> ADM John M. Richardson, “A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority,” *Naval War College Review* 69 (Spring 2016), 11–18.

<sup>336</sup> He did not cite CS21 in his blog, however. VADM Kevin Donegan, “The Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority in the 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet,” <http://navylive.dodlive.mil/2016/03/21/the-design-for-maintaining-maritime-superiority-in-the-5th-fleet/>.

<sup>337</sup> Rear Admiral P. Gardner Howe III, “President’s Forum: The CNO’s Design and the Naval War College,” *Naval War College Review* 69 (Spring 2016), 9–10.

## FY 17 Navy budget statements

In February 2016, President Obama sent his federal budget request for Fiscal Year 2017 to the Congress. In March, the Department of the Navy leadership testified in support of their portion of the request. Despite the initial TOR's call for CS21R to specifically target Capitol Hill, no mention was made of the document or its contents in the Department's budget justifications to the Congress. Although the Secretariat had insisted—successfully—that Secretary of the Navy Mabus sign a Preface to CS21R, the Secretary made no mention of it in his subsequent Posture Statement.<sup>338</sup> Neither did the CNO, who referenced the new *Design* instead.<sup>339</sup> The Commandant of the Marine Corps did, however, cite CS21R in his Posture Statement.<sup>340</sup>

The Navy Department's formal "Budget Highlights Book" began with sections labelled "Overview" and "Strategic Guidance."<sup>341</sup> These borrowed ideas from CS21R, as well as from *Expeditionary Force 21* (EF 21) and the Secretary of the Navy's "4 P's."<sup>342</sup> They did not actually cite the CS21R document, however, and omitted any reference to its constructs. They did, however, cite EF 21 and the CNO's *Design*, and borrowed the 10-mission construct from the 2014 DOD *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR).

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<sup>338</sup> See, for example, *Statement of the Honorable Ray Mabus Secretary of the Navy before the House Subcommittee on Defense, Committee on Appropriations on 1 March 2016* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of the Navy, March 1, 2016). One can speculate that the Secretary and his staff may not have wanted to call attention to a document so positive on the need for and effects of naval forward presence, in the wake of the widely circulated memorandum from the Secretary of Defense to the Secretary of the Navy requesting that he rebalance the Navy program away from more forward presence platforms and toward more capable warfighting systems. See "Document: Budget Directive Letter from SECDEF Carter to SECNAV Mabus," *USNI News* (December 17, 2015), <https://news.usni.org/2015/12/17/document-budget-directive-letter-from-secdef-carter-to-secnav-mabus>. There may be other explanations, however.

<sup>339</sup> *Statement of Admiral John M. Richardson, U.S. Navy, Chief of Naval Operations, before the House Subcommittee on Defense, Committee on Appropriations, on the Fiscal Year 2017 Navy Budget* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, March 1, 2016), <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AP/AP02/20160301/104529/HHRG-114-AP02-Wstate-RichardsonA-20160301.pdf>.

<sup>340</sup> *Statement of General Robert Neller, Commandant of the Marine Corps, before the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee on Navy and Marine Corps FY17 Budget Request* (March 1, 2016), 11.

<sup>341</sup> *Highlights of the Department of the Navy FY 2017 Budget* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2016), 1-1-1-6 [http://www.secnav.navy.mil/fmc/fmb/Documents/17pres/Highlights\\_book.pdf](http://www.secnav.navy.mil/fmc/fmb/Documents/17pres/Highlights_book.pdf).

<sup>342</sup> As noted earlier, the Secretary often used the "4 P's" construct in his writings and speeches: People, Platforms, Power, and Partnership.

## A new *Naval Operations Concept* (NOC)?

Several months after publication of CS21R, Marine Corps leaders began to call for an update to the *Naval Operations Concept* (NOC) that had been tied to the 2007 CS21 and signed and published by the three maritime service chiefs in 2010.<sup>343</sup> Retired General (and CMC) Alfred Gray and retired Marine Corps Lieutenant General (LtGen) George Flynn made the suggestion publicly in August 2015.<sup>344</sup> In his FRAGO promulgated in January 2016, new CMC Gen Robert B. Neller laid out as a goal for the Corps “Establish a Naval Operating Concept in conjunction with the Navy to be completed in FY 16.” He added: “Framed by Cooperative Strategy 21 (CS21), we will collaborate with the Navy on a Naval Operating Concept (NOC) revision in order to shape our concept of naval campaigning and naval expeditionary operations.”<sup>345</sup> He repeated the call for a new NOC in his Posture Statement to the U.S. Congress a month and a half later.<sup>346</sup> A couple of weeks after that, the Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration said that the Navy and Marine Corps were taking a “hard look” at the NOC because it had not been updated since 2010.<sup>347</sup>

The Marines subsequently determined that the anticipated tri-service “Classified Annex” to CS21R would achieve their goals for the NOC, thereby satisfying the Commandant’s intent in his FRAGO.

## *Naval Warfare: Naval Doctrine Publication 1*

Meanwhile, the 2010 tri-service *Naval Warfare: Naval Doctrine Publication 1* was also apparently still in use, although it too had been tied deliberately and closely to the 2007 version of CS21.<sup>348</sup> It was unclear if or when it would be revised, replaced, or

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<sup>343</sup> General James T. Conway, Admiral Gary Roughead, and Admiral Thad W. Allen, *Naval Operations Concept 2010: Implementing the Maritime Strategy* (2010).

<sup>344</sup> See Gen Al Gray USMC (Ret.) and LtGen George Flynn USMC (Ret.), *Naval Maneuver Warfare: Linking Sea Control and Power Projection* (Arlington, VA: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, August 25, 2015).

<sup>345</sup> General Robert B. Neller USMC, *Frago 01/2016: Advance to Contact* (Washington, DC: United States Marine Corps, January 19, 2016), 9.

<sup>346</sup> Statement of General Neller, 11.

<sup>347</sup> Lee Hudson, “Navy, Marine Corps reps discussed using alternative shipping in Africa,” *Inside the Navy* (March 21, 2016), 5.

<sup>348</sup> General James T. Conway, Admiral Gary Roughead, and Admiral Thad W. Allen, *Naval Doctrine Publication (NDP) 1: Naval Warfare* (Norfolk, VA: Navy Warfare Development Command, March 2010).

cancelled. The drafting and tri-service coordination of the 2010 edition had been led by the Navy Warfare Development Command (NWDC).

## Navy 2016 Force Structure Assessment (FSA)

Early in 2016, CNO ADM Richardson and various members of the OPNAV staff announced that they were undertaking a new Navy Force structure assessment, due to changes in the operational environment.<sup>349</sup> Due to be presented in the summer of 2016, it remains to be seen the degree to which it will use the judgments and conclusions of CS21R, or the analyses behind them, regarding those changes. The Navy's guidance on force structure assessments—released just prior to the rollout of CS21R—asserted that they are informed, inter alia, by “Navy strategic guidance,” as part of the methodology used; and that OPNAV N81 would conduct them “in collaboration with . . . the Director, Strategy and Policy Division (N51).”<sup>350</sup>

## Concomitant efforts to revitalize Navy strategy

ADM Greenert's 2011 direction to create a “refreshed” maritime strategy was part of a slowly massing effort on his part, spearheaded by OPNAV N51 and the Naval War College, to revive Navy strategy prowess. CS21R described the effort as “the establishment of the Navy Strategic Enterprise to create synergy among the naval staffs and other strategically minded institutions, and the development of a cadre of strategic thinkers.”<sup>351</sup>

Besides the revision of *A Cooperative Strategy*, the revival achieved several other milestones during his tenure as CNO:

- In December 2011, CNA published a series of 17 reports on the development of USN strategy from 1970 through 2010.<sup>352</sup> Some of the volumes were consulted from time to time by drafters of CS21R. The CNA studies in turn

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<sup>349</sup> See, for example, Megan Eckstein, “Navy Revising Force Structure Assessment in Light of Increased Attack Sub, Other Ship Needs,” *USNI News*, February 29, 2016, <https://news.usni.org/2016/02/29/navy-revising-force-structure-assessment-in-light-of-increased-attack-sub-other-ship-needs>.

<sup>350</sup> OPNAV Instruction 3050.27: *Force Structure Assessments* (15 Feb 2015).

<sup>351</sup> *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* (2015), 31.

<sup>352</sup> The CNA reports are available at <https://www.cna.org/research/capstone-strategy-series>.

catalyzed the drafting of several Ph.D. dissertations on recent Navy strategy, both in the U.S. and abroad, to provide future additional useful reference works for Navy strategists. Three dissertations were subsequently published, as of this writing, one of which has been subsequently reformatted and published as a book.<sup>353</sup>

- The Navy improved its screening procedures for sending officers to war college, Federal Executive Fellows (FEF), and graduate school programs where they could study strategy. A new comprehensive FEF orientation program and tighter FEF links to OPNAV were instituted. FEF officer follow-on assignments increasingly utilized the FEFs' knowledge, insights and skills gained during their FEF tours. OPNAV N51 led this effort.
- Closer relations were achieved between OPNAV, the Naval War College, CNA, and other Navy war gaming efforts, within a broader revival of war gaming in the Navy and throughout the Defense Department, aided by the support of Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work and Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus.
- The publication and dissemination of N3/N5 newsletters were revived for a time by RADMs Foggo and Harley (successive N3/N5Bs).
- The Naval War College created and maintained a new Advanced Naval Strategist Program for Navy officers.
- The Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) established and implemented a special "688" strategy curriculum for Navy officers.
- In June 2014, at the Current Strategy Forum at the Naval War College, CNO ADM Greenert publicly announced his intention to "revitalize Navy strategy" and formally launched the new Navy Strategic Enterprise, incorporating and accelerating the previous efforts noted above. Periodic Strategic Enterprise Senior Executive Group (SEG) and Strategy Operations Group (SOG) meetings began.<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> See Haynes, *Toward a New Maritime Strategy*; Bruns, "U.S. Navy Strategy and American Sea Power"; and Lundesgaard, "Controlling the Sea and Projecting Power." The Bruns dissertation is scheduled to be published as a book by Routledge in fall 2017.

<sup>354</sup> ADM Jonathan W. Greenert USN, speech at the Current Strategy Forum, Naval War College, Newport RI, June 17, 2014, <https://www.usnwc.edu/About/News/June-2014/CNO-Kicks-off-65th-Annual-Current-Strategy-Forum.aspx>. See also Lea and Polski, *Assessment of the Navy Strategic Enterprise*; Mark Hooper and Tuan Pham, "More Maritime Strategists—Now," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* (December 2014), <http://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/>

- OPNAV N51 tasked the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) to assess how the Navy formulates and implements strategy.<sup>355</sup>
- Annual U.S. Navy Key Strategic Issues Lists (KSILs) were published, to better focus research by USN Federal Executive Fellows (FEFs) and selected Navy graduate students. KSILs now were developed initially at the Naval War College, passed to OPNAV N51 for adjudication and collating, then ultimately signed out by the Assistant Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (N3/N5B) and the President of the Naval War College, CNA contributed to the launch of the KSIL initiative.
- A January 2015 NAVADMIN message announced establishment of a Naval Strategy Subspecialty, and designated billets and officers, drafted in OPNAV N515.
- Skilled former Navy strategy officers who had returned to civilian life were re-hired as government civilians and contractors to complement and supplement the uniformed strategists assigned to OPNAV N51, adding to the institutional memory, skill set and depth of experience in that office.
- OPNAV N51 tasked CNA to analyze the new Navy Strategic Enterprise; to recount the development of CS21R (this study); to publish USN strategy documents 2001–2010 (with the Naval War College); to convene conferences on “Future Navy Strategy,” and to provide support to the “Classified Annex.”<sup>356</sup> The CNO’s Strategic Studies Group (SSG) likewise tasked CNA to research the effects of the pre-1996 SSG, which had focused on naval strategic and operational concepts.

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2014-12/more-maritime-strategists%E2%80%94now, accessed September 11, 2015; Russell et al., *Navy Strategy Development*; and Young, “When Programming Trumps Policy and Plans.” Other informed recommendations on improving the *Navy Strategic Enterprise* are in Haynes, *Toward a New Maritime Strategy*, 249–252.

<sup>355</sup> The Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) provided its assessment of U.S. Navy strategy development in June 2015. See Russell et al., *Navy Strategy Development*; and Young, “When Programming Trumps Policy and Plans.” In the spirit of the *Navy Strategic Enterprise*, Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) researchers interviewed appropriate CNA analysts for their study.

<sup>356</sup> CNA provided its assessment of the Navy Strategic Enterprise in September 2015. See Lea and Polski, *Assessment of the Navy Strategic Enterprise*. As of 2016, the studies of the SSG and twenty-first century strategic documents were still in progress. A series of Navy-sponsored conferences had been conceptualized, organized and managed as outlined in this study, with varying degrees of CNA involvement as required. CNA contributed to the Navy’s development of a “Classified Annex” throughout 2015 and 2016.

- In June 2016 and June 2017, the Naval War College, in conjunction with its annual Current Strategy Fora, the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), and OPNAV N3/N5, hosted "Naval Strategist Symposia." The purpose of these events was to bring the Navy strategist community together and leverage its collective intellect to help shape the strategic vision of the U.S. Navy.<sup>357</sup>
- The informal, unofficial naval Strategy Discussion Group (SDG) in Washington, DC continued to grow and prosper, attracting dozens to its unclassified off-the-record discussions and hundreds to its e-mail distribution list. ADM Greenert addressed the Group annually on strategy during his term of office as CNO.<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> The Symposium was summarized for N3/N5 in Alexander Alden, *Naval Strategist Symposium 2016* (Arlington, VA: CNA, 2016) DCP-2016-U-013784-Final.

<sup>358</sup> The Group had been founded in 2008, continuing the dialogue and discussion generated during the creation of the 2007 CS21. Its leadership included retired U.S. Navy Captains and former Navy strategists R. Robinson "Robby" Harris, E. Richard "Dick" Diamond, Peter M. Swartz; and later LT Christopher O'Keefe.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The U.S. Navy had produced at least 35 “capstone” strategy documents between 1970 and 2012.<sup>359</sup> Some, like the *Maritime Strategy* of the 1980s, had relatively long-lasting relevance (in the case of the *Maritime Strategy*, its utility endured until the end of the Cold War.)<sup>360</sup> Others, like *Won if by Sea* (1990), were aborted, unsigned, or sank without much of a trace.

CS21R was an effort to revise an earlier strategy to reflect the evolution of the international security environment as well as the long-term decline in defense spending. Those responsible for the revision had to grapple with a complex set of interlocking requirements—writing for multiple domestic and international audiences, linking strategy to budgets and programs, and emphasizing warfighting while not neglecting the cooperative aspects of security. What was intended to be a short-term effort stretched out to almost four years, with factors like sequestration, changing national guidance, personnel turnover, and the challenges of multi-service engagement contributing to the length of the process. Drafting and promulgating a Navy strategy document is difficult; doing so for a tri-service Maritime Strategy is even more difficult.

What conclusions, insights and recommendations can the CS21R development and dissemination process just recounted offer for future Navy strategy-writing efforts?

## Challenges in creating CS21R

The drafting of CS21R faced numerous challenges, as we have recounted here. To summarize, they included the following:

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<sup>359</sup> Swartz with Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts: Introduction, Background and Analyses*, 25.

<sup>360</sup> Dr. John B. Hattendorf and Peter M. Swartz, eds., *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1980s: Selected Documents*. Newport Paper 33 (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2008), 1.

- The demanding nature of writing a service-level strategy, requiring intellectual acuity, stamina, responsiveness, speaking and writing abilities, and coordination and cooperation skills.
- Lack of an agreed, well-designed, and well-understood standardized process for devising a Navy strategy, necessitating a long series of ad hoc decisions and actions.
- Lack of consistency, agreement, clarity, and salience of two critical focusing issues: What was the central purpose of the document, and who was its primary audience?
- Varying degrees of attention by the CNO and N3/N5, and changing CNO guidance.
- A plethora of other CNO-authored or -mandated documents released throughout the drafting process, meant to complement the strategy but in effect often overshadowing and diluting its importance and distracting its readers.<sup>361</sup>
- Periodic release of national-level strategy documents, affecting CS21R's timelines and content in ways uncontrollable by the Navy.
- Disparate views and interests of the three separate services contributing to the document.
- Competing powerful Navy offices and talented officers with ideas, especially OPNAV N51, OPNAV N00Z, OPNAV N81, and the Naval War College Center for Naval Warfare Studies (CNWS). Cross-organizational relationships were often characterized by competition as well as consensus building.
- Competing and unresolved views between N3/N5 and N8 (and between N51 and N81) regarding linking the strategy to the program and the budget.
- Insufficient direct access to the CNO and his ideas by the primary drafting office, N51.
- Navy personnel turnover at all levels of drafting and oversight except for the CNO himself and the SES Deputy Director for Strategy and Policy (N51B)—particularly, rapid turnover of mid-level Navy flag officers in OPNAV N3/N5.

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<sup>361</sup> On the phenomenon of “document fatigue” and the Navy’s previous experience with it in the 1990s, see Swartz, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategy, Policy, Vision and Concept Documents*, 39.

- Significant substantive participation in the process by determined and hardworking officers and civilians whom the Navy had not, however, equipped with advanced educational and experiential backgrounds in strategy and policy development, since many with those backgrounds had been assigned elsewhere.
- Constantly slipping deadlines due to CNO and mid-level intervention or lack of attention, personnel turnover, national document publication timelines, and unusual congressional considerations regarding the national defense budget.
- Numerous required internal Navy flag officer and staff approval layers and coordinating entities to be accommodated.
- A tendency by some participants toward discussion of issues rather than deciding them, often revisiting the same issues even after decisions had been made.
- Limited interest in and appreciation of the utility of a consistent, coherent and powerful statement of Navy strategy in furthering Navy objectives in parts of the DON Secretariat, N8, N9, OLA, CHINFO and other Navy offices.

## Conclusions

The following conclusions, drawn from the preceding narrative—and taking into account the challenges just recounted—may prove relevant in any prospective future Navy strategy development initiatives.

- In retrospect, it would appear that the purpose of CS21R was to signal to whomever might be interested that the Navy understood that the world, the domestic budgetary environment, and technology had changed significantly since 2007, and was therefore updating its strategy statement. In this useful effort, the Navy was successful, because the document did draw attention, especially among academics (among whom the reaction to its substance, however, was mixed); in China (where the reaction was generally hostile); and in the office of an important Congressman (whose reaction was positive).
- In part because of the challenges encountered in drafting the document, the CNO established a “Navy Strategic Enterprise,” manifesting itself mostly in occasional meetings of senior Navy leaders to discuss strategy’s role in the service. In particular, establishment of the Enterprise rekindled relationships among OPNAV N51, the Naval War College, and Navy component commander N5s that had atrophied. These challenges also called attention to deficiencies

in the Navy's war gaming program, and in how the Navy trains and uses its cadre of strategists. Steps were then taken to try to correct those deficiencies.

- That was about it. CS21R appears to have accomplished no other significant purpose. It was not the primary vehicle for the CNO to convey his views (rather, it was just one among many). It was not a driver or a rationale for Navy programming and budgeting (nor was it presented as such on Capitol Hill). It did not inform the exercise schedules and scenarios of the Navy component commanders or the war gaming agenda of the Naval War College (although perhaps that will be a role for the “Classified Annex” when that document is published.) It did not trigger revision of the *Naval Operations Concept* (NOC) or *Naval Doctrine Publication 1* (NDP 1): *Naval Warfighting* (although it did render them obsolete). It did not energize much of the officer corps to think deeply about the purpose of their profession (as evidenced by scant mention by serving officers in the pages of *Proceedings* or in the blogosphere.<sup>362</sup> It was not used as the Navy input to the drafting of national security, Department of Defense, Department of the Navy, or joint documents. It was not used to support U.S. Navy messaging at the International Seapower Symposia (ISS) at Newport. And it was the nominal capstone Navy document for only a short period, before it was superseded in that role by CNO ADM Richardson’s *Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority*.
- The changing global security environment, U.S. domestic politics, and continuing innovation in military technology will doubtless contribute to a perceived need for yet another strategic “revision” or “refresh.” Future DOD and national-level strategies will no doubt reflect new developments in international security and technology, and senior naval leaders will almost certainly want to make sure that maritime strategy is up to date with those changes. But they need to do so with their eyes open.
- Moreover, there is a “cult of the new” deeply ingrained in Washington policymaking culture. To reach an audience and to fashion a strategic statement with an enduring shelf life, one must say something novel—but not so novel that it “treads on the command prerogatives of the next CNO, whose appointment [is] only a few years away, and who invariably [has] different ideas and needs.”<sup>363</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> CAPT Peter Haynes’s critique of CS21R in *Toward a New Maritime Strategy* is a possible exception. It may be that his book—including the two pages on CS21R—may well stimulate strategic thought in the officer corps.

<sup>363</sup> Haynes, *Toward a New Maritime Strategy*, 246.

- The development of CS21R serves as a reminder of the enduring importance of language and the necessity to use words, sentences, and paragraphs in fluid and felicitous ways. Future writers of strategy must always remain alert to the fact that audiences—domestic and foreign—who follow naval affairs closely will parse strategic statements with the utmost care, and often form opinions and make decisions based on their parsing.
- It is difficult, but not impossible, for the Navy to develop a compelling and consistent over-arching strategy and policy message. It is also a challenge for busy leaders to stay on message and use the language and concepts of capstone strategic documents in their day-to-day activities. The Navy is a vast organization containing numerous competing visions, which is further complicated by different generations, warfare communities, and educational, operational and staff experiences within the service. The Navy is also a bureaucracy in which strategy and policy statements can be quite useful. Consequently, there are numerous centers throughout the Navy where such documents are continually created and disseminated. Disciplined, speedy, and mutually supportive coordination is essential for the Navy to develop and propound a compelling central message. Drafters of documents with “strategy and policy front ends” need to coordinate their work (with OPNAV N51 and/or the broader Navy Strategic Enterprise). Navy strategists in OPNAV N51 have to respond to coordination requests knowledgeably and quickly. Moreover, Navy strategists must be agile, resourceful, perseverant, and savvy enough to know where the most important such efforts are being conducted, especially on the OPNAV staff, and to seek out as well as merely respond to coordination opportunities.
- It is even more difficult for the Navy to develop, promulgate, and benefit from its capstone strategy document when the contents of that document must be mediated by two other services, some of whose concerns may not match well with those of the Navy. There is certainly benefit to be had from tri-service strategy documents, given the commonality of the mediums in which they operate and the complementarity of their missions. But there is also a price to pay in getting across unique aspects of the Navy’s own strategic message.
- The Navy may well need its own single-service policy- and strategic-level documents, as well as to play a role in drafting and promulgating bi-service and tri-service documents. The Navy has important unique characteristics compared to the other sea services. Obviously, incoming CNO ADM Richardson thought so when he published his own *Navy Strategic Plan* and his *Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority* only some months after taking office. One aspect of calling it a “design” was that it was a new term for a Navy capstone document, and one with no precedent for requiring integrated Marine Corps or Coast Guard collaboration. “Maritime strategies,” “naval operations concepts,”

and “naval doctrine publications,” however, now all have recent precedents as bi-service or tri-service documents. There should be no expectation that the other sea services can be anything other than integrated co-equal participants in the drafting processes for successors to these documents. The original Navy TOR for refreshing CS21, citing “no obvious need for an extensive collaborative approach” was bound to have caused initial inter-service irritation, and then a Navy climb-down from that position. The same was predictably true for the Navy’s initial wish to develop a “Secret Supplement” to CS21R “for Navy audiences.” But the Navy does have unique needs—just like the other two sea services. They routinely publish their own capstone documents at the policy and strategic levels, and there is no reason why the Navy cannot or should not do the same when it sees the need. (This may have been a motivating force behind the “six themes” versions of CS21R promoted by OPNAV N51). The Navy does need to be careful what it calls such single-service documents.

- Any Navy strategy is inherently the CNO’s document. To give meaning, power, and focus to the strategy, he or she must be its champion. The CNO has to sign it, and assuming it will be tri-service document, he or she must get his fellow sea service chiefs to sign it. For it to have any effect at all, it must be a document that reflects his beliefs and desires. Staff officers, deputy chiefs of staff, and sister service commandants will all have their inputs and ideas, and will—and should—argue for them vociferously. But at the end of the day, it’s the CNO’s document, not theirs, and (usually but not always) not his/her successor’s.
- Consequently, drafters have to be closely attuned to the CNO’s beliefs and desires, the better to incorporate them with their own views and the inputs from others, to come up with a coherent document. Bureaucratic layers can often be an impediment. They slow things down and inhibit the dialogue between the CNO and his action officers. Frustrated by the lengthy timelines of the staff approval and coordination process, CNOs then often turn to their special assistants, executive assistants, speechwriters, or other hand-picked authors to short-circuit the system. What this can do, however, is just add one more layer to the chop chain, slow processes down even more, put one more “cook” into the kitchen, and frustrate hardworking action officers initially charged with the assignment. The lesson is to develop a disciplined, streamlined process in which the staff action officers have the access to the CNO that they need to capture the CNO’s vision and intent. As a consequence,

they must also enjoy the trust and confidence of the captains, flag officers, and senior Navy civilians layered in between.<sup>364</sup>

- Ideally, the CNO should have a coherent plan for getting his messages out, and a clear understanding of the role that his strategy document should play in that plan. Releasing a plethora of related and quasi-related documents reduces the value of the strategy as a “capstone” document and indeed can call its entire rationale into question. Before he ever released his strategy, ADM Greenert had already published his *Sailing Directions*, a series of *Navigation Plans* and *Position Reports*, and four annual posture statements on Capitol Hill, not to mention a dozen substantive articles in policy and military journals, half of which were in the Naval Institute *Proceedings*, the professional journal aimed at the Navy officer corps. Once he had published CS21R, he then turned his attention to yet another CNO-commissioned publication, his *How We Fight* book, released just as he was leaving office. In ADM Greenert’s mind, this multitude of thoughtful publications were doubtless all complementary efforts, but they proved also to be competing ones, diluting the message of the strategy and weakening its effects. To many, CS21R had become “just another document on the pile” and (given its March 2015 late publication date) one with potentially short-lived impact. This was borne out ten months later by the redirection of the Navy officer corps’ attention to implementing his successor’s *Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority*, promulgated in January 2016.
- There needs to be general agreement on the anticipated relationship of the Navy strategy document to the Navy POM build. Given the canonical Pentagon “PPBE” construct, OPNAV N3/N5 has tended to believe that a strategy product that it drafts (the initial “Planning” “P” in PPBE) should be linked to (and ideally, drive) the development of the Program (the second “P”). CNOs sometimes agree with this view, and sometimes they do not. The vast and powerful N8 and N9 organizations usually do not hold this view. They have tended to believe that they have more than enough other guidance to get their jobs done without an additional product from N3/N5 (or N00Z, for that matter) to accommodate in the POM process.<sup>365</sup> If the CNO wants the strategy to inform the POM, he has to ensure that all the key players have the same vision. If the

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<sup>364</sup> For more on this point, see Young, “When Programming Trumps Policy and Plans.” For implications beyond the Navy, see Margaux Hoar and Dave Zvijac, “Right Ends, Wrong Means: What Congress is Missing on Defense Reform,” *War on the Rocks*, August 11, 2016, <http://warontherocks.com/2016/08/right-ends-wrong-means-what-congress-is-missing-on-defense-reform/>.

<sup>365</sup> See Young, “When Programming Trumps Policy and Plans” on this point.

CNO is uninterested in having the strategy inform his POM, N3/N5 or N51 have little chance of success of making this happen on their own.

- Speed is important. Everyone agrees that CS21R took too long to publish—longer than any other Navy capstone document stretching back to 1970 (the document that year took only 60 days, more or less, and therefore was called “Project SIXTY”).<sup>366</sup> Taking a long time allows other documents to fill the Navy’s conceptual voids, and weakens the effect of the ultimate capstone document that eventually emerges. Also, the longer a document takes to produce, the less time the CNO who sponsored it has in his/her tenure to actually use it. ADM Greenert was able to use CS21R for only seven months before he was relieved by RADM Richardson, who published his own capstone document four months into his term.<sup>367</sup> If the CNO gets distracted, N3/N5 or other trusted actors must remind the CNO of the need for speed in this regard.
- Personnel turnover has to be expected during the development of a capstone strategy document and it should not be allowed to stymie the writing process. The incessant personnel churn of OPNAV DCNOs, ADCNOs, division directors, branch heads, action officers and special assistants—plus their opposite numbers in the Marine Corps and Coast Guard—has to be planned for and managed. Likewise, service chiefs can change out of phase with each other. In this inevitable circumstance of uniformed personnel turnover, the continuity provided by senior civil servants (like OPNAV N51B and the MCCDC/CD&I Concepts Branch Chief)—as well as by long-term civilian supporting players at institutions such as the Naval War College, the Naval Postgraduate School and the Navy’s Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC)—appears vital. But to get the most out of these players, it is important that their institutional memory be respected and used; that they be invited early on to play important and continuing roles in document development; and that they be encouraged to advocate for the document after its publication, especially after its uniformed drafters and champions had moved on to other assignments.

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<sup>345</sup> On Project SIXTY, see Jeffrey Sands, *On His Watch: Admiral Zumwalt’s Efforts to Institutionalize Strategic Change* (Alexandria, VA: CNA, 1993).

<sup>367</sup> CS21R and the *Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority* were not, to be sure, comparable in content. They were comparable, however, in their perceived positions at the apex of the hierarchy of Navy documents. Under CNO ADM Greenert, CS21R could be said to be the Navy’s most important “capstone” document, and, as such, needed to be read and cited. Under CNO ADM Richardson, it was clear that his *Design* was henceforth the most important set of ideas from the Navy leadership, to be developed and implemented by the service.

- Successors should deal quickly with updating or changing their predecessors' strategy decisions, and not put such actions off. The alternative example is CS21R: It took almost four years to be signed out, despite an immediate and robust start, leaving almost no time for it to influence anything. It was quickly superseded by the next CNO'S *Design* as the Navy officer corps' "capstone document" to follow.
- National, DOD, and joint strategy and policy documents add to the churn. Waiting for them to be signed out can compound the delaying effects of high personnel turnover. Hard decisions have to be made as to whether to wait or not. For CS21R, the delay occasioned by the lengthy drafting of the DOD's *Quadrennial Defense Review* was probably the biggest drag on CS21R's timelines.
- The Navy has a strong bench of talented officers and civilians—including flag officers and senior civilian executives—with the requisite specialized and high-quality education and experience to conceptualize and draft strategic-level naval documents. A glance at the selected thumbnail biographies in the notes to this paper confirms this judgment. The very best of these men and women should be made available to oversee and write the inevitable successor documents to CS21R. This is because drafting and coordinating naval strategy takes not only dogged determination and hard work, but also a particular mindset, knowledge base, and skill set. This includes not only a first-rate post-graduate education, but also consummate staff skills and an aggressive, energetic, and outgoing nature to deal proactively and eye-to-eye not only with fellow strategists, academics, and think tank wonks, but also with OPNAV flag officers, program and budget staff officers, special assistants, speechwriters, and CNO consultants. These paragons certainly exist in the Navy, but they must be appropriately identified, assigned, and protected by the Navy's senior leadership. Unfortunately, this is often difficult: As a side-effect of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, the Navy's cadre of strategy-educated and strategy-experienced officers has been divided and scattered throughout the OSD, Joint Staff, and Combatant Command staff bureaucracies, which have grown in size, while OPNAV N51 has shrunk.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> On this issue, see Steven Wills, "The Effect of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 on Naval Strategy, 1987-1994," *Naval War College Review* 69 (Spring 2016), 21-40. This is not an issue limited to the Navy. As Dr. Andrew Krepinevich has pointed out, "The decline of competence when it comes to defense strategy can also be attributed to the fact that strategy requires not only persistent effort, but that it also is something that is difficult to do well. Eisenhower realized this and noted that: 'The basic principles of strategy are so simple that a child may understand them. But to determine their proper application to a given situation requires the hardest kind of work from the finest available staff officers.' Consequently, he tasked small

- It seems obvious in retrospect that there were far too many players—many of whom had the requisite talents just described—deeply involved in the creation of CS21R, especially on the Navy side. This contributed to slowing the process down. Just about everyone involved in drafting the document felt strongly and personally invested in the project and wanted to make a significant contribution. While laudable in each individual case, in the aggregate this ended up being a recipe for near-paralysis. Future OPNAV N3/N5 middle managers with similar responsibilities for strategy-creation should reflect on the experiences of the CS21R teams, and devise ways of making disciplined useful contributions within much shorter timelines and higher-velocity processes. They should resist the temptation to over-contribute, and try to trust the knowledge and skills of the drafters they had specially selected—or fire them and get a new set of drafters.
- Middle managers need to consider how large the Navy drafting team needs to be, and why, as well as the optimal mix of military, civilian and contractors on the team. The more N51 personnel who are assigned full time to the drafting team, the less there are that are available for other duties in that chronically under-resourced division...*From the Sea*, CS21, and CS21R were very manpower-intensive Navy “capstone” document team drafting efforts. On the other hand, successive versions of *The Maritime Strategy* of the 1980s were typically written by one or two action officers (LCDRs or CDRs), assisted by a lieutenant and actively overseen by his branch head (CAPT), but able to draw on the expertise of the entire branch (and elsewhere in OPNAV and the fleet) periodically as needed, and well-trusted by their flag officer superiors.
- Much of the discussion among players in creating the document dealt with questions of terminology and typology, upon which it was usually difficult to obtain complete agreement among all players. Few readers appear to care much about these debates, however. Naval officers are typically nonchalant in their use of strategic terminology, and don’t mind such nonchalance in their service’s capstone documents. The same is true of congressional members and staffs. They have little interest in the difference between a “function” and a “mission,” and most are amazed when advised that others have such concerns. Leaders charged with overseeing the drafting of Navy capstone documents should consider placing limitations on such discussions to avoid wasting time

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groups of highly competent strategists to develop strategy. Yet for a variety of reasons the current development of U.S. defense strategy is not undertaken by proven strategists, but as part of a bureaucratic process involving hundreds of people. It is not a persistent endeavor, but an occasional undertaking.” Dr. Andrew Krepinevich, *Statement Before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Defense Strategy* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, October 28, 2015).

and effort, and concentrate instead on ensuring that the document addresses the very real concerns of its primary target audiences, and includes—somewhere and clearly—every point on the value proposition for seapower that the sea services are trying to get across, and built-in counters to current criticisms of that value proposition.

- Once a construct is agreed upon, there is merit in consistently using it and not substituting other constructs in explaining the strategy. Multiple dueling constructs can lead to confusion and dilute the Navy’s strategic message. Constantly repeating CS21’s internal constructs of “missions” and “functions” to publicize and explain it reinforces the message of the document. Using the alternative “six themes,” the document’s subtitle, the Navy’s “programmatic themes” or some other typology, however, can weaken the power of that message.
- It is possible that publishing an initial memorandum of understanding/terms of reference/planning order signed by senior officers would be useful in enforcing needed discipline on the process.<sup>369</sup> There is danger, however, in this as well: The CS21R experience did not lack for such a TOR. But that TOR applied only to one of the three participating services, and was modified and re-modified, each revision necessitating successive draft versions, creating a wasteful and undisciplined additional workload itself. Likewise, the N51 “Playbook” and rollout plan were significant products of numerous staff hours, but proved to be infrequently used once the document was actually released. Such supporting administrative work can become onerous and time-consuming, and it can detract from more pressing naval needs. If an initial plan is signed, then it behooves all concerned to follow the plan. If there is no initial plan, or if it becomes quickly outdated, the Navy and other staffs involved must respond quickly to changed taskings and continue to push for rapid conclusion of the drafting process, rather than spend valuable time and resources fully staffing a follow-on plan, only to find it to be overtaken by events downstream (and the cycle repeated). The sea services are particularly adept at this operationally, and should be able to exercise their staff processes accordingly.
- The Navy should consider taking better advantage of the network of institutions in and connected to the Navy where strategic-level talent resides: OPNAV N3/N5, to be sure, but also the DON Secretariat, Fleet Forces Command and Navy Component Commander N5s, the Naval War College, the Naval

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<sup>369</sup> In a April 20, 2016 e-mail to Peter M. Swartz (CNA), MCCDC/CD&I Concepts Branch head John Berry cogently argued for such, as well as for personnel stability on the writing team.

Postgraduate School (NPS), NWDC, CNA, for-profit consultants, and nonprofit think tanks (especially those with Navy Federal Executive Fellows assigned). Mobilizing and using those resources can enhance not only the creation, but also—perhaps more important—the dissemination of a Navy strategy. Ignoring them or keeping them away from the effort can be a recipe for irrelevance once the final document is completed.

- Build cross-institutional coalitions to bring a strategy to life and contribute to lengthening its relevance. For example, the professors at the Naval War College and Naval Postgraduate School should be teaching—and critiquing—the resultant strategy. The War Gaming Center at the War College should be gaming it. And the Fleet should be exercising it. Such deliberate folding of the strategy into the Navy’s training, education, and analysis centers of excellence should be integral to any Navy strategy dissemination plan—and its implementation. In the 1920s and 1930s, extraordinary synergies were achieved among several only loosely linked Navy institutions—the War Plans division developing successive versions of *War Plan Orange*, the Bureau of Aeronautics (BuAer), the War Gaming Center and academic courses at Newport, and, of course, the annual “Fleet Problems” of the U.S. Fleet.<sup>370</sup> Likewise, *The Maritime Strategy* of the 1980s gained its power from the synergies achieved among a similar lineup of loosely linked entities: An aggressive SECNAV, three strategy-minded CNOs in a row, an N3/N5 Directorate at the top of its game, an Office of Naval Intelligence with compelling analyses of the potential enemy, specialized secret high-level cross-cutting organizations formed to translate intel into fleet operations, a POM process that strove to elevate the role of warfighting considerations, the world-famous annual Global War Games at Newport, the CNO’s Strategic Studies Group (also at Newport), and the innovative and aggressive forward exercises conducted by the numbered fleets and the submarine forces. Strengthening and exercising the Navy Strategy Enterprise (established in 2014) should prove helpful.
- Consider the virtues of drafting the classified version of the strategy first. This can focus drafters on target audiences that include the naval officer corps, the national security establishment and bureaucracy, fleet commanders and their staffs, and Pentagon POM builders. This also can help to focus and lend specificity—and utility—to the document’s content. Once the classified version is completed, a version of it can be republished for broader audiences in an

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<sup>370</sup> Naval analyst Dr. Mark Mandeles calls these synergies “multi-organizational systems,” and credits them with the Navy’s successes in developing carrier aviation and amphibious operational concepts in the interwar years. See his *Military Transformation: Past and Present: Historic Lessons for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2007).

unclassified form. This was the Navy’s experience in publishing its capstone documents in the 1970s and 1980s, and could prove as successful and useful in the future.

- Page layouts, titles, headings and graphics matter in conveying the most important elements of a strategy document. The record of CS21R’s development shows the importance to many of its drafters and overseers of the optimum listing of “naval missions.” The final decision on a list of seven was the result of a great deal of internal discussion and debate, sometimes heated and often lengthy. Yet this important typology—while mentioned twice in the text—is buried in two thick introductory paragraphs, and is nowhere given the salience of the “five essential functions.” In retrospect, it appears that few readers even notice them, despite painstaking efforts in the text to assign appropriate missions to each function. The functions are described as being “in support” of the seven missions, implying a secondary conceptual role, but this is not at all evident from the way they are presented in the document. It is much easier for the reader to focus on the five functions, not the seven missions. This is in large part because of the bold print that is used to introduce the five functions. Use of similar bolding, bullets, and/or perhaps a matrix would have given the seven missions far greater visibility—and therefore greater potential influence on the thinking of readers—presumably what was desired.
- When it’s over, it’s not over. Promulgation of the document is not the last step in the process, but just the beginning of a vital new process of active advocacy, engagement with key constituencies, and, where appropriate, responses to commentary on the document, when necessary. This may not be seen as good news to weary staff officers for whom getting a publication of such complexity out the door is an enormous accomplishment in and of itself. But it is true. And the best staff people to carry that post-publication load are those who had earlier been involved in the strategy’s development. This necessitates involving people in the pre-publication process whom leaders know will still be on board during the dissemination and comment phase. It also means not releasing players who were central in creating the document immediately after its promulgation. A negative effect of CS21R’s lengthy gestation period was its adding to the difficulty in bridging the two phases (drafting and dissemination). CAPT McLain was assigned to draft the document originally, with full knowledge that he was due to retire soon thereafter. CDR Williams’s return to sea duty after less than a year as McLain’s relief was likewise predictable. CAPT Michael completed his own Navy career soon after publication of CS21. None was available to champion the document following

its release, although this had been obvious many months in advance.<sup>371</sup> Superb and hardworking new officers assigned to N51 in the wake of publication of CS21 were perforce focused on the creation of new products like the Navy Strategic Plan and the Classified Annex, and elaborating on and implementing the new CNO's Design, not dissemination of CS21 or taking on its critics. N51 RDML McQuilkin himself refocused on a very useful initiative to improve the U.S. Navy's engagement in South Asia, once the CS21R document was signed, rather than focusing on orchestrating a CS21R global influence campaign. With the exception of N51B Mr. Stubbs's rebuttal of Professor Robert Watts, few in the Navy took on any of the carpers at the strategy publicly, thereby missing the opportunities that the public criticisms afforded them to get the Navy's message across and reinforce it to a wider audience.

- The Navy's track record and predicted future practice has often been to assign officers to draft and advocate Navy capstone strategy documents who will no longer be in the Navy soon after the documents are published. To mitigate negative effects of this practice, the Navy should not only strive to assign its most potentially upwardly mobile officers to these tasks, but also to ensure that appropriate Navy and Navy-affiliated civilians (with more potential longevity than its officers) be so assigned throughout the development process as well, in key supporting roles. Serving Naval War College faculty were clearly instrumental in publicizing and advocating for CS21 long after its uniformed drafters had left the service. The SES Deputy N51 Division Director and a CNA vice president were likewise able to help keep alive and articulate the principles of CS21R once its Navy authors had retired.

## Recommendations

This is the sixth major formal study on the making of recent and current U.S. Navy strategy to have been published within the past two years.<sup>372</sup> Some of the others provided listings of recommendations for the Navy to consider, including recommendations regarding the drafting and promulgation of strategy documents. To our knowledge, not many of these recommendations have been acted upon. Since

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<sup>371</sup> The same phenomenon had impeded the proper dissemination of the 2007 CS21: VADM Morgan and CDR McGrath both retired from the service soon after their product had been published.

<sup>372</sup> Others were Russell et al., *Navy Strategy Development* (Naval Postgraduate School); Lea and Polski, *Assessment of the Navy's Strategic Enterprise* (CNA); Haynes, *Toward a New Maritime Strategy*; Bruns, "U.S. Navy Strategy and American Seapower"; and Lundesgaard, "Controlling the Sea and Projecting Power."

there was obvious utility in recounting the development of CS21R in this study, we have done so. Compiling yet another list for the Navy of unconsidered recommendations on strategy-making, however, has not seemed to us to be as fruitful an endeavor, especially given the quality of those already presented.

We therefore repeat—and endorse for Navy consideration—those selected recommendations from two recent previous studies that focus specifically on strategy-drafting and promulgation, as illustrated by the narrative we have presented on the creation and dissemination of CS21R:

### From the NPS study (2015)

- Codify and publish OPNAV planning guidance, signed by CNO or SECNAV<sup>373</sup>
- Narrow the scope of N51 planning guidance—prioritize based on strategy and senior leadership policy priorities
- N51 needs to maintain an active role in the PPBE process throughout the POM after planning priorities have been released
- Determine best practices from previous efforts to develop high-level strategies, particularly the recently-concluded CS21R effort
- Develop a roadmap for future strategy development efforts based on a sound, structured approach to thinking about the future geopolitical, security, and economic environment
- Implement an intellectually rigorous, ongoing effort to monitor the strategic environment to determine when the current, published strategy should be revisited.
- Utilize the Navy Strategic Enterprise Initiative to search for “new ideas” to inform Navy strategy.

### From the CNA Navy Strategic Enterprise study (2015)

- Utilize the Navy Strategic Enterprise (NSE) institutions—the Senior Executive Group (SEG) and the Strategy Oversight Group (SOG)—to surface and discuss issues of alignment of all Navy documents containing strategic content.

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<sup>373</sup> See also the recommendations in Young, “When Programming Trumps Policy and Plans.”

- Consider drafting an OPNAV instruction on the Navy’s strategic planning process, describing the cognizant offices, purposes, audiences, and inter-relationships of the various Navy documents with strategy-level content, and the appropriate processes for drafting and coordinating them, to ensure a unified Navy communications effort and product at the strategic level. The instruction should include an agreed methodology for aligning the various documents, to achieve a consistent message.
- Narrow the time between publication of Navy capstone strategy documents. Eight years is too long for any strategic document to maintain currency, credibility, and relevance in the programming and budgeting milieu.
- N51 to proactively seek out and cultivate points of contact in N00Z, N8, and the Secretariat to enable it to know when new documents with strategic-level content are beginning to be drafted, and coordinate with those POCs henceforth.
- N51 to improve focusing and leveraging the research, analysis, wargaming, and concept development expertise at the Naval War College, NPS, NWDC, NHHC, CNA, and other commands and institutions to improve the content of N51 strategic products and to tap into these other commands’ and institutions’ networks of contacts in OPNAV, the fleets, and elsewhere.
- Utilize the SEG and the SOG—and the SDG—to identify and coordinate appropriate Navy discussants as well as appropriate target audiences for Navy strategic messaging.
- Apply these recommendations in particular to the impending publication of the Classified Annex.
- Hone the competence and knowledge base of N51 strategy drafters—and those they coordinate with in other offices and commands—through encouraging their attendance at the plethora of conferences on strategic subjects that occur in the Washington, DC area, at the Naval War College and the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), as well as participation in the Washington-area Strategy Discussion Group (SDG).
- Seek to gain and maintain access to the CNO and his thinking, either directly or indirectly through trusted agents on his personal staff, and ensure it forms a basis for N3/N5 staff work. At the end of the day, the CNO is the Navy’s chief strategist, and the boss of N3/N5 and N51.

## From the CNA Navy capstone strategies study (2009)

We would also call attention to the recommendations made several years ago in CNA's Navy Strategy study of 2009–2011, to help inform the drafting of CS21R.<sup>374</sup> We will not recap them here, but all are still worthy of consideration.

## Insights from participants in the drafting of CS21R

In the research for this study, we also collected the views and recommendations of several of the main participants in the drafting of CS21R. Two of those participants offered their own conclusions and recommendations for future strategy writers that are deeply informed by the CS21 experience and merit inclusion in this study.<sup>375</sup>

### *A drafter's five insights*

When asked for his insights, based on his deep experience as the lead drafter for CS21R for two years—and of the *Naval Operations Concept 2010* before that—CAPT John McLain responded succinctly:

- In an era of *Defense Planning Guidances* (DPGs) and *Quadrennial Defense Reviews* (QDRs) the role and purpose of a “Navy strategy” is worth long consideration
- Long, drawn-out drafting processes inherently weaken and water down a strategic document
- Normal staff chop processes and review/approval strata are the death of clear strategic thought
- Strategies and strategy revisions are arduous tasks requiring clear and strategic rationale prior to their undertaking and throughout the process: A service should not undertake them without a clear and compelling vision of what it wants and why it wants it
- Only the force of a CNO's will can drive a new strategy—and whatever has his signature (e.g.: *Sailing Directions*) is a de facto strategy.

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<sup>374</sup> See Swartz, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategy, Policy, Vision and Concept Documents: What to consider before you write one*, 61–79.

<sup>375</sup> Inclusion does not necessarily imply endorsement, however.

### *A leader's "Guidelines for Developing Navy Strategy"*

While this study was underway, the Deputy Director for Strategy and Policy (N51B), Mr. Bruce Stubbs, considered and developed his own set of "lessons observed" from the effort to create and disseminate CS21R. He was the only significant Navy player in the effort to have participated in it from start to finish besides CNO ADM Greenert. What follows reflects his thinking as of July 2016.<sup>376</sup>

1. Distinguish the difference between *strategy* and *strategic planning*. Some tend to conflate the two. The essence of strategy is about making choices and setting priorities. *Strategy* is about understanding your environment and making hard choices about what you will do and not do. *Strategic planning* is about making choices on how to use the resources you have and the actions you will take to achieve the choices made in your strategy. In other words, a *strategy* is a solution to move from where you are now to where you want to be. It deals with uncertainty—the possibility that opposing forces may inhibit you reaching your objective. A *plan* is how you will move from where you are to where you want to be; it provides a way to reach your objective.
2. Realize that the Navy requires *two* service-level strategies. Each strategy has different ends, ways, and means. The first is a *seapower* strategy, based on the Samuel P. Huntington model for a service to have a "well-defined strategic concept of how, when, and where the military service expects to protect the nation against some threat to its security."<sup>377</sup> The *ends* of this strategy are the military conditions to implement national policies; the *means* are the Navy forces and capabilities; and the *ways* are Navy core functions and missions. The second is a *force structure* strategy to maintain the current force and develop the future force. The *ends* for this strategy are the specific forces and capabilities required to carry out national-level strategies; the *means* are principally fiscal resources; and the *ways* are force design principles.
3. Ensure Navy strategy informs the budget process. The *sine qua non* of a good strategy is to ensure that Navy programmers accept the strategy's categorization scheme, so that they will use its *form* and therefore easily adopt its *substance*. If not, then strategy will not inform the budget. The same categorization scheme must work for OPNAV N3/N5, N8, N9 and, most important, the CNO, so that the strategy is reflected in both the form and the substance of the follow-on stages of POM and budget development. For

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<sup>376</sup> Mr. Bruce Stubbs e-mail to Peter M. Swartz, July 6, 2016, as edited for publication by Peter Swartz.

<sup>377</sup> Huntington, "National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy."

example, CNO ADM Vern Clark's *Sea Power 21* was organized around *Sea Strike*, *Sea Shield*, *Sea Basing*, and *Force Net*, a categorization scheme useful to N8, ONR, and others.<sup>378</sup>

4. Use a narrative. Narratives are compelling story lines which explain events convincingly from which inferences are drawn. Narratives must be more than a simple list of facts. Narratives act as the Navy's brand: Guiding decision-making to ensure institutional coherence through a story that justifies an actor's deeds. Strategic documents provide enduring strategic communication, set within a contextual background, and identify the ultimate goal or end state. This enduring strategic communication with context, reason/motive, and goal/end state is the narrative.
5. Can't predict the future. Effective strategy for the future isn't about finding certainty, but about coping with uncertainty. Remember the wisdom of British naval analyst and historian Eric Grove, who stated: "The basic point is that the future is inherently uncertain; the only certainty is uncertainty and one rejects this fundamental truth at one's peril."<sup>379</sup> And British strategic thinker Colin Gray, who stated: "One has to emphasize, develop, and maintain capabilities sufficiently adaptable to cope with a range of security challenges, since particular threats and opportunities cannot be anticipated with high confidence."<sup>380</sup>
6. Do not substitute technology for strategy. Per U.S. Army Major General MG H.R. McMaster's guidance: "While emerging technologies are essential for military effectiveness, concepts that rely only on those technologies, including precision strikes, raids or other means of targeting enemies, confuse military activity with progress toward larger wartime goals. We must not equate military capabilities with strategy."<sup>381</sup>
7. Stress the Navy's value proposition: *Seapower*. The ability to use the world's oceans, and to deny other countries the use of the world's oceans for taking actions against U.S. interests, constitutes an immense asymmetric advantage

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<sup>378</sup> CNO Admiral Vern Clark, "Sea Power 21: Projecting Decisive Joint Capabilities" U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 128 (October 2002), 32-41.

<sup>379</sup> Eric Grove, "In an Uncertain World, We Can't Afford to Throw Away Britain's Naval Strength," *Yorkshire Post* (UK), March 2, 2011.

<sup>380</sup> Colin Gray, "War—Continuity in Change, and Change in Continuity," *Parameters* 40 (Summer 2010), 5-13.

<sup>381</sup> H.R. McMaster USA, "The Pipe Dream of Easy War," *The New York Times*, July 20, 2013.

for the U.S., one so ubiquitous and longstanding that it can be easy to overlook or take for granted.

8. Differentiate *Seapower* from *Forward Presence*. *Forward presence* is how the Navy and Marines geographically operate and employ forces. In short, it is the Marines' and Navy's operational concept. *Presence* is a place! It is geography. Whether we apply *seapower* in the Caribbean, the Arctic, or the Western Pacific, it is *seapower* that provides the national security options, *not being forward per se*. For example, it was seapower that successfully addressed Soviet missile threat during Cuban Quarantine, an operation that occurred some 90 miles off our coast. This significant naval operation does not represent the value of going forward. It represents the value of seapower.
9. Make the hard choices (strategy's essence). A good strategy must state the challenges confronting the U.S. Navy and identify essential choices. It also identifies Navy advantages and adversary weaknesses, and explicitly links means available for achieving ends. Moreover, it makes choices and sets priorities—it explicitly: states what objectives are not going to be sought; describes how and where risk will be accepted; and establishes a pecking order for resources to achieve objectives.
10. Define all your terms (especially "What is strategy?"). Words count, and words convey concepts. If they are not defined, the thinking about them cannot be clear. For example, one person's definition of presence can be another's definition of posture. Lack of definitions can cause ambiguity and confusion. The term strategy articulates how an organization will move forward. It is about balancing ends, ways, and means; that is, the objectives to be accomplished—"the what"; the means (resources and forces) required to accomplish the objectives—"the who"; and the ways for employing the resources and forces—"the how."
11. Understand that all CNOs want their Maritime Strategies without fail. It is best that incoming CNOs publish their maritime strategies shortly after taking office, and not at the very end of their tenures, thereby tying the hands of their successors.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Key offices and personnel

### Secretary of Defense

Jul 2011-Feb 2013	Hon. Leon Panetta
Feb 2013-Feb 2015	Hon. Chuck Hagel
Feb 2015-present	Hon. Ashton Carter

### Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Oct 2011-Sep 2015	GEN Martin Dempsey, USA
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### Secretary of the Navy

May 2009-present	Hon. Ray Mabus
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### Chief of Naval Operations (CNO)

Sep 2011-Sep 2015	ADM Jonathan Greenert
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### DCNO for Operations, Plans and Strategy (OPNAV N3/N5)

Dec 2009-Feb 2012	VADM Bruce Clingan
Jun 2012-Jul 2013	VADM Mark Fox
Jul 2013-Jun 2014	VADM Michelle Howard
Jul 2014-Aug 2015	RADM Kevin Donegan (Acting)

## ADCNO for Operations, Plans and Strategy (OPNAV N3/N5B)

Nov 2010–Mar 2013    RADM Bruce Grooms  
Mar 2013–Aug 2013    RADM Peter Gumataotao  
Aug 2013–Oct 2014    RADM James G. Foggo, III  
Oct 2014–present      RADM Jeffrey Harley

## Director, Strategy and Policy Division (OPNAV N51)

Aug 2011–Aug 2013    RDML Michael Smith  
Sep 2013–Apr 2016    RDML William McQuilkin

## Deputy Director, Strategy and Policy Division (OPNAV N51B)

Jun 2011–present      Mr. Bruce Stubbs

## Head, Strategy Branch (OPNAV N513)

Aug 2011–Oct 2012    CAPT Kevin Brenton  
Sep 2012–Aug 2014    CAPT Frank Michael  
Aug 2014–Oct 2015    CAPT William Combes

## Lead N513 CS21R drafter (OPNAV N513 action officer)

Jun 2011–Jun 2013    CAPT John McLain  
Jul 2013–Apr 2014    CDR Thomas Williams  
Apr 2014–Jul 2015    CAPT Frank Michael

## N513 CS21R drafting and support team members (2011–2015)

LCDR Thane Clare

CDR Jeremy Butler

LCDR Ryan Kendall

LCDR Ben Anderson

LCDR Jennie Stone

LCDR Andrew Corso

LT Taylor Dewey

Mr. Aaron Stollar

Ms. Susan Lindahl

RADM James R. Stark (Ret.)

CAPT Kevin Parker

Mr. Brian Kawamura

Mr. Travis Moths

## Director, CNO Commander's Action Group (OPNAV N00Z)

May 2011–Oct 2013     Mr. Bryan Clark

Nov 2013–Jan 2014     Mr. Jud von Kolnitz

Jan 2014–Jul 2015     CAPT Michael Studeman

## President, Naval War College

Mar 2011–Jul 2013     RADM John Christenson

Jul 2013–Jul 2014     Walter E. "Ted" Carter

Jul 2014–present     RADM P. Gardner Howe III

## Dean, Naval War College Center for Naval Warfare Studies (CNWS)

2011-Jun 2014	CAPT Robert "Barney" Rubel (Ret.)
Jul 2014-Jun 2015	CAPT Thomas Culora (Acting) (Ret.)
Jun 2015-present	CAPT Thomas Culora (Ret.)

## Chair, Strategic Research Department (SRD) (after Jan 2016: Strategic and Operational Research Department) (SORD))

2011-Sep 2013	Dr. Peter Dombrowski
Oct 2013-present	Dr. Andrew Winner

## Chair, WAR Department

2011-Jun 2015	CAPT Thomas Culora (Ret.)
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## Commandant of the Marine Corps

Oct 2010-Oct 2014	Gen James F. Amos
Oct 2014-Sep 2015	Gen Joseph F. Dunford, Jr.

## Marine Corps drafting team members

2011-2015	Mr. Douglas King, Deputy Director, MCCDC/CD&I G3/G5 and—from 2012—Director, Ellis Group
2011-2015	Mr. John C. Berry, Director, Concepts Branch, Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, MCCDC/CD&I
	LtCol Robert Clark, Ellis Group, Relieved by LtCol Randy Risher, Concepts Branch

## Commandant of the Coast Guard

May 2010–May 2014    ADM Robert Papp

May 2014–present    ADM Paul F. Zukunft

## Coast Guard drafting team members

Fall 2011–Sum 2012    CDR Joseph Defresne

Sum 2012–Fall 2014    CAPT Matthew J. Gimple, LCDR Jim Jarnac

Fall 2014–2015    CAPT Dana Reid

## Appendix B: Study interview subjects, correspondents, and contributors

Mr. John Berry

CDR Thane C. Clare, USN

CDR Bryan Clark, USN (Ret.)

Professor Peter Dombrowski

RADM Kevin M. Donegan, USN

VADM James G. Foggo, III, USN

ADM Jonathan Greenert, USN

RADM Jeffrey A. Harley, USN

ADM Michelle Howard, USN

Mr. Douglas Jackson (CNA)

LCDR Jim Jarnac, USCG

Mr. Robert Marshall

CAPT John McLain, USN (Ret.)

CDR Dana Reid, USCG

RDML Michael E. Smith, USN

RADM James R. Stark, USN (Ret.)

Mrs. Amanda Stokes

Mr. Bruce Stubbs

Dr. Eric Thompson (CNA)

CAPT Thomas R. Williams, USN

Mr. William Yale (CNA)

## Appendix C: Study draft reviewers

Mr. John Berry

Dean Thomas Culora

Mrs. Catherine Lea (CNA)

Mr. Robert Marshall

CAPT John McLain, USN (Ret.)

CDR Dana Reid, USCG

Mr. Bruce Stubbs

Dr. Eric Thompson (CNA)



## CNA

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