

The Impact of the CNO's Strategic Studies Group (SSG), 1981-1995

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Approved by:

September 2016

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken E. Gause".

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Abstract

This research memorandum examines the organizational history of the CNO's Strategic Studies Group (SSG) for its first 15 years (1981-1995). CNO Admiral Hayward established the SSG in 1981 as a venue to prepare potential Flag officers for three- and four-star command and as a focal point, stimulus, and major source of strategic thinking. We determine that the SSG was largely successful in fulfilling these objectives until the Goldwater-Nichols reform and the end of the Cold War directed the CNO's responsibilities away from strategic planning. In 1995, this shift prompted CNO Admiral Boorda to change the SSG's focus to naval innovation. CNA documented this history using archival and publically available research, interviews with SSG alumni and former CNOs, a workshop, and the recollections of Dr. John T. Hanley, who served as Deputy Director of the SSG and as the lead researcher for this endeavor. An accompanying information memorandum, entitled *Making Captains of War: The CNO Strategic Studies Group (SSG), 1981-1995*, provides more details of the SSG's history.

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Executive Summary

In 1981, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Admiral Thomas Hayward established the CNO Strategic Studies Group (SSG) to prepare potential Flag officers for three- and four-star command, stimulate strategic discourse among the Navy leadership, and enhance the reputation of the Naval War College. The institution existed until 2016; however, in 1995, CNO Admiral Jeremy M. (Mike) Boorda changed its focus from strategy to naval warfare innovation.

The first fourteen SSGs are remembered as having made significant contributions to U.S. Navy policy, operational art, and tactics, and to the development of the Maritime Strategy. Until now, there has been little systematic documentation or analysis of the SSG's contributions to the U.S. Navy's strategic endeavors in that era. At the request of the Director of the CNO's SSG, CNA has documented the history of SSGs I-XIV, using archival research, open-source literature, interviews, and personal recollections of a key author.

Establishing the SSG

When Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Thomas B. Hayward established the SSG in 1981, the Navy had begun to develop an atmosphere that was conducive to strategic and operational innovation. Changes in the U.S. defense establishment in the wake of the Vietnam War set the stage for a revival of strategic thinking in the Navy during the late 1970s and 1980s. The 1970s had seen the introduction of a host of next-generation systems into the U.S. Navy's fleet, and new, revolutionary systems were on the horizon. The capabilities available to the Navy were changing the way that it could counter the Soviets. New sources of intelligence were also changing the strategic perspective of the Navy. Across the fleet, officers were innovating naval operations in their deployments, and changes in OPNAV were also reflecting the Navy's efforts to process the changing strategic inputs.

Developments at the Naval War College (NWC) were also contributing to the atmosphere of strategic thinking. Professor Francis "Bing" West produced *Sea Plan 2000*, a naval force planning study. *Sea Plan 2000* in turn contributed to the establishment of the Global War Game series in 1979. The change in presidential administration in 1981 also served as a catalyst for establishing the SSG, as it

ushered in an era of increased defense spending and a more aggressive stance in matters of policy and strategy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union.

The SSG concept began with outgoing Under Secretary of the Navy Robert J. Murray, who had seen these strategic changes unfolding and identified a gap in the Navy's thinking. Murray envisioned an organization that he called the Center for Naval Warfare that would be based in Newport and would "serve as a focal point, stimulus, and major source of strategic thinking." It would report directly to the CNO and exist at his sole discretion to study topics of the greatest importance to the Navy.

After Murray created the program from scratch with SSG I, the yearly program remained largely consistent through SSG XIV. The approach relied on several key elements: readings, lectures, and research; meetings with experts; war games; and interactions with high-level Navy activities and leadership. The year began with an orientation period that included extensive readings and lectures by NWC faculty and outside experts. In addition to the standard academic interactions at the NWC, the SSG fellows spent considerable time visiting other relevant academic institutions, forward commands and staffs, and non-government organizations. The SSG relied heavily on games, although the sorts of games it used changed over time in response to differing analytical needs. The SSG fellows participated in the Navy's most prominent senior-level events, such as the Navy CINCs Conferences, Global War Games, International Seapower Symposia, Current Strategy Forums, conferences conducted by NWC and the Center for Naval Analyses, Navy Long-Range Planning, and Cooke Strategy Conferences.

During these years, the SSG consistently produced analysis of direct relevance to the CNO. The early SSGs focused on generating new strategies and operational concepts for the use of seapower against the Soviet Union. The later SSGs in this series turned their efforts towards futures analyses to help the CNO man, train, and equip the Navy for future threats.

Impact of the SSG

Over the course of this study, CNA conducted interviews with dozens of former SSG fellows, directors, and staff members, and all living former CNOs who either oversaw SSGs I-XIV or served on one as a fellow. To a person, they spoke highly of the value of the SSG and its impact on their career. They also freely offered their perspectives on the reasons for its success.

Much of the success of the SSG is linked to its close association with the CNOs and with the CNO's engagement with the SSG fellows. The CNOs hand-picked top officers for assignment to the SSG and met with the group regularly over the course of the year. The CNO typically assigned the SSG to study a particular topic. Early on, the SSG

succeeded largely due to the assistance of Bob Murray, the most recent former Under Secretary of the Navy. Without him, it is not likely that the nascent SSG would have had the resources, access, or legitimacy that was required to firmly establish itself as an influential strategic institution.

The most important product of the SSG was its cadre of officers, many of whom would go on to shape both the U.S. Navy and the broader U.S. government. Nearly half of the SSG fellows from this era were promoted to Flag rank; at its peak in 2000, 30 percent of Navy four-star officers were SSG alumni. Two SSG fellows eventually became CNO. The fellows briefed their findings and recommendations not just to the CNO but also to senior Navy leadership as a whole. This dialogue served to pollinate strategic and operational concepts across the Navy and proved to be a more valuable SSG product than the final written reports, which were typically only distributed to a few recipients, including the CNO.

The success of SSG I heavily influenced the subsequent development of the SSG and its further success. The first SSG not only provided a template for the progress and activities of future SSGs but also achieved an immediate reputation as a valued contributor to Navy thinking and action. The SSG's success was also partly due to the receptive climate for war-winning operational concepts that existed in the U.S. Navy in the early 1980s. The SSGs were more influential in studying central Navy deterrence and warfighting concepts during the Cold War than in studying future trends and crisis response after it had ended.

Lessons from the SSG

Should the Navy again consider establishing an organization to support the strategic education of future three- and four-star officers and to stimulate strategic thought at the highest echelons of Navy leadership, we offer a number of recommendations, based on our study of SSGs I-XIV. These include the following:

- The CNO should be personally and actively engaged with the SSG.
- The SSG should be small and free of other bureaucratic responsibilities.
- It should contribute to the Navy's most important contemporary issues, and should have the clearance and access necessary to support its mission.
- It should use the best experience and methodologies from inside and outside the U.S. Navy, and should have the latitude to pursue these in support of its mission.
- It should start with a bang, as it will set a precedent for its future success.

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Glossary

AAW	Anti-air warfare
ASUW	Anti-surface warfare
ASW	Anti-submarine warfare
ATP	Advanced Technology Panel
CEF	Conventional Forces in Europe (Treaty)
CEP	CNO Executive Panel
CINC	Commander-in-Chief
CINCLANT	Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Forces Atlantic
CINCPACFLT	Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet
CMC	Commandant of the Marine Corps
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
CNWS	Center for Naval Warfare Studies
CWC	Composite Warfare Commander
DCNO	Deputy Chief of Naval Operations
EA	Executive Assistant
EW	Electronic warfare
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
NWC	Naval War College
PACOM	U.S. Pacific Command
PPBE	Planning, Programming, Budget, and Execution
SECNAV	Secretary of the Navy
SSBN	Nuclear-powered fleet ballistic missile submarine
SSG	Strategic Studies Group
SSN	Nuclear-powered attack submarine
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Talks
TACTRAGRU	Naval Tactical Training Group
TQL	Total Quality Leadership
U.N.	United Nations
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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Introduction

In 1981, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Admiral Thomas Hayward established the CNO Strategic Studies Group (SSG) to prepare potential Flag officers for three- and four-star command, stimulate strategic discourse among the Navy leadership, and enhance the reputation of the Naval War College. The institution existed until 2016. In 1995, however, CNO Admiral Jeremy M. (Mike) Boorda changed its focus, largely because Goldwater-Nichols reform and the end of the Cold War had directed the CNO's responsibilities away from strategic planning, towards naval warfare innovation

The first fourteen SSGs are remembered as having made significant contributions to U.S. Navy policy, operational art and tactics, and the development of the Maritime Strategy. Until now, there has been little systematic documentation or analysis of the SSG's contributions to the U.S. Navy's strategic endeavors in that era.¹ With that in mind, the Director of the CNO's SSG asked CNA to conduct a study of the SSGs during the years prior to 1995, when the group's tasking changed. The efforts of this project have yielded a comprehensive examination and documentation of the SSG's activities from 1981 to 1995.

Specifically, the sponsor requested that CNA:

- Document what the SSG did, through 1995, and why and how it did it.
- Document how the SSG evolved over time until 1995, and why.
- Identify and assess any changes that SSG products effected in the Navy.
- Identify and assess the effects that the SSG experience had on individual SSG members and in subsequent assignments, in effecting change in the Navy.
- Identify and assess other important effects of the SSG's products.

¹ See the bibliography for the unclassified literature available discussing SSGs I-XIV. In particular, see John Hanley, "Creating the 1980s Maritime Strategy and Implications for Today," Naval War College Review (Spring 2014): 11-29.

- Analyze the findings and provide a report on the combination of features and circumstances that resulted in the SSG having the greatest impacts on the Navy and national security.

This study represents one of two major products of this project. In it, CNA offers its analysis of the successes and best practices that led to the early SSG positively impacting the Navy and national security. The other document details as thoroughly as possible the SSG activities and serves as the primary base of information for this report.

Approach

In order to document the activities of the first fourteen SSGs as thoroughly as possible, we initiated a broad research plan, collecting archival documentation, conducting interviews with SSG alumni and others, and distributing our findings throughout the process in order to provoke further conversation and elicit more information from our contacts. This approach had six aspects:

- **Document collection.** CNO SSG offices in Newport maintain a considerable, yet incomplete repository of SSG materials. The quality of documentation of each year's activity varies widely, as there was no official process for preserving notes or SSG products. Nevertheless, the SSG archive in Newport formed the basis for research, which was supplemented by documents preserved by the Naval History and Heritage Command in Washington, DC; by documents held by CNA; and in the personal records of SSG alumni.
- **Unclassified literature.** Unclassified literature about the SSG is available, including some pieces written by SSG members themselves. It includes articles published in the *Naval War College Review* or in the U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, other journal articles and book chapters, and oral histories based on interviews by the staff of the U.S. Naval Institute and the Naval Historical Foundation. (See the bibliography for details.)
- **Interviews.** CNA made a considerable effort to locate and interview as many individuals associated with the SSG as possible. In total, the research team conducted over 80 interviews in person, by phone, or by email. Interviewees included former SSG fellows, and all surviving SSG directors and CNOs who led the SSG between 1981 and 1995. For a complete list of interviewees, see Appendices C and D.
- **Workshop.** CNA convened and facilitated a workshop of SSG alumni on 19-20 February 2015 in order to identify important data and insights through structured discussions of the value of successive SSGs. The workshop included

25 former SSG fellows, all surviving SSG directors, and several other subject matter experts. (See Appendix E for a complete list of participants.)

- **Solicitation of feedback.** Information collected from original documentation and solicited via interviews and the workshop was compiled into a single document that records, in as much detail as possible, the activities of each SSG. This document also records interviewees' insights and observations on the value of the SSG and other lessons. After we compiled the document, we circulated it to the interviewees so that they could confirm the documentation of their recollections and fill in blanks that had emerged during research. This process helped make the story of SSGs I-XIV as complete as possible.
- **Analyst recollections:** Dr. John Hanley was the conceptualizer and a principal analyst contributing to this project. He brought a unique quantity and quality of data and insights to the project, having served in a senior support capacity on the staff of the SSG from its inception until 1998. His personal files, contacts, and recollections proved invaluable and central to our research effort. To a lesser extent, the files, contacts, and recollections of Peter Swartz, the study director, made a similar contribution. He had served during the SSG years as one of the authors of *The Maritime Strategy*, and, as a long-time analyst at CNA, had participated in numerous in-depth studies of Navy policy, strategy, and operations during the years when SSGs I-XIV were in session.

About this report

The results of our research are extensive. As we circulated an initial draft narrative for review, additional information and clarifications emerged, and the inputs ballooned the working document to such an extent that it now may be inaccessible to many seeking to understand the story of the early SSG. For this reason, the study has produced two separate documents.

CNA is releasing the working document, in its entirety, as an information memorandum (IM) under the title *Making Captains of War: The CNO's Strategic Studies Group (SSG), 1981-1995*.² The IM includes all of the information that CNA was able to surface about the SSG throughout the duration of the study. In total, that document is large, over 300 pages, but represents a thorough compilation of inputs from all of the interviewees who contributed to the study and the documentation

² John T. Hanley, Peter M. Swartz, and Christopher Steinitz, *Making Captains of War: The CNO's Strategic Studies Group (SSG), 1981-1995* (Arlington, VA: CNA, September 2016).

that we were able to uncover. Without a doubt, it is the most comprehensive narrative of early SSG activities produced to date.

Understanding that not all readers will be inclined to read the IM, CNA is also releasing this report, a research memorandum (RM) that draws upon the IM and its sources, and provides the appropriate references. It is considerably more concise and lacks many of the rich details captured in the IM. Readers seeking a finer level of detail about any SSG issue than is reflected in this report should look first at the IM. This research memorandum tells the story of the founding of the SSG, describes the activity and impact of each group, and addresses each of the aforementioned analytical questions that the SSG posed to CNA.

Fair Winds for Founding the SSG

When Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Thomas B. Hayward established the SSG in 1981, the Navy had begun to develop an atmosphere that was conducive to strategic and operational innovation. Changes in the U.S. defense establishment in the wake of the Vietnam War set the stage for a revival of strategic thinking in the Navy during the late 1970s and 1980s.³ Among these changes were new platforms and access to new intelligence that were changing how the Navy viewed operations against the Soviets. The recognition of the need to refocus on strategy and operational art was occurring on multiple levels and in numerous places throughout the U.S. Navy. Across the fleet officers were innovating naval operations in their deployments, and in the Pentagon OPNAV was being reorganized to cope with these changes.

The 1970s had seen the introduction of a host of next-generation systems into the U.S. Navy's fleet. These included the Nimitz-class carrier (CVN), the Spruance-class destroyer (DD), the Los Angeles-class attack submarine (SSN), the Perry-class missile frigate (FFG), the Tarawa-class amphibious assault ship (LHA), the A-6E attack aircraft, the F-14 fighter with its Phoenix missile, the P-3C maritime patrol aircraft, and Harpoon and Tomahawk missiles. Other new systems—such as Aegis cruisers and Trident submarines—were just over the horizon. The fleet had just recently begun deploying these new systems, experimenting from the bottom up with new tactics, techniques, and procedures. Few people yet had given serious thought as to how these systems could all be optimally netted into one large theater campaign, let alone a forward strategic effort against the Soviets all across the globe.⁴

As Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet (CINCPACFLT) in 1976, Hayward himself had developed a new plan for countering the Soviets in the Pacific, known as Sea Strike.⁵ His appointment as CNO two years later would cement the spirit of

³ John B. Hattendorf, *The Evolution of the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy, 1977-1986*, Newport Paper 19 (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2004): 38-40.

⁴ On the U.S. Navy in the 1970s, see Peter M. Swartz with Karin Duggan, *The U.S. Navy in the World (1970-1980)* (Alexandria, VA: CNA, December 2011).

⁵ On Sea Strike, see CAPT James M. Patton, U.S. Navy (Ret.), "Dawn of the Maritime Strategy," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 135 (May 2009): 56-60.

operational innovation at the higher echelons of the Navy.⁶ Thus, Hayward was a receptive audience when outgoing Under Secretary of the Navy Robert J. Murray proposed a concept for the organization that would become the SSG.

New sources of intelligence were also changing the strategic perspective of the Navy. In particular, the Advanced Technology Panel (ATP) was playing a vital role in changing the strategic vision of the Navy. By the late 1970s, Navy efforts to develop special intelligence sources provided deep penetration of the Soviet Navy's thinking and practices. Though the ATP had been created several years earlier, Hayward and his Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral William Small, repurposed it in 1981 to review the new intelligence and develop strategy, operations, and tactics for acting on it. The ATP reported directly to the CNO, and its work reinforced Admiral Hayward's belief that naval strategy had to evolve in order for the Navy to keep pace with Soviet developments. The ATP would use the SSG to further its agenda in a couple of key instances, and the SSG would gain a great deal from its exposure to the ATP's data and insights.⁷

Changes in OPNAV were also reflecting the Navy's efforts to process the changing strategic inputs. In 1980, CNO ADM Hayward expanded the mandate of OP-095 from anti-submarine warfare to oversee how the Navy conducted all aspects of naval warfare. From that point OP-095 would oversee planning for all Navy warfare areas, including strike and amphibious warfare, anti-air warfare, anti-surface warfare, and electronic warfare. OP-095 also picked up responsibility for fostering Navy tactical development (OP-953).⁸ CNO ADM Hayward was particularly interested in improving naval tactics, and set up Naval Tactical Training Groups (TACTRAGRUs) in each fleet to develop and teach new tactics. Over the years, OP-095 proved to be an advocate within the Navy staff for strategic, operational, and tactical concepts emanating from the SSG.

Created in 1978, OP-603 (the Strategic Concepts branch) was carefully stocked by successive Navy DCNOs for Plans, Policy and Operations (OP-06) with Navy politico-military (pol-mil) officers specially educated and experienced in the formulation of

⁶ On Admiral Hayward, see his oral history, *The Reminiscences of Admiral Thomas B. Hayward, U.S. Navy (Retired)* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 2009).

⁷ On the ATP, see Christopher Ford and David Rosenberg, *The Admiral's Advantage* (New York: Naval Institute Press, 2014); and RADM Tom Brooks, USN (Ret.) and CAPT Bill Manthorpe USN (Ret.), "Setting the Record Straight: A Critical Review of *Fall from Glory*," *Naval Intelligence Professionals Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (April 1996): 1-2.

⁸ On the broadened mandate for OP-095, see Floyd D. Kennedy, Jr., "A New Office of Naval Warfare," *National Defense* (February 1981): 28-31, 67; and Thomas C. Hone, *Power and Change: The Administrative History of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1946-1986* (Washington DC: Naval Historical Center, 1989): 106, 111-112, and 119.

naval policy, strategy, and operations. By the early 1980s, it was routinely manned by Navy graduates of Harvard, Fletcher, SAIS, and similar institutions, often on repeat tours and often with PhDs. When the Navy decided to lay out its “maritime strategy,” these would be the officers who would draft, brief, and publish it, often with vital inputs from the SSG.

Developments at the Naval War College were also contributing to the atmosphere of strategic thinking. In the early 1970s, the so-called “Turner Revolution” had catapulted the Naval War College into the front rank of military educational institutions in the world. Central to the “revolution” was a re-emphasis on the study of military strategy. A world-class civilian faculty was attracted to teach it, and some of the most intellectually creative officers in the Navy (e.g., CDR Linton Brooks and CDR Ken McGruther) sought positions there as students or faculty or both. The wargaming center had been famous as a crucible of naval operational and tactical innovation since the run up to World War II. The president of the Naval War College in 1979-82 was RADM Edward Welch, a highly experienced Navy political-military expert with wide and deep experience in arms control negotiations on the Joint Staff and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, where he had been a long-time mentor of Bob Murray.⁹

In 1978, at the behest of Secretary of the Navy Graham Claytor, Under Secretary of the Navy James Woolsey, and CNO ADM James L. Holloway, Naval War College Professor Francis “Bing” West produced *Sea Plan 2000*, a naval force planning study. The study provided a strategic policy framework within which the use of naval forces could be understood and specific program decisions could be made. It argued that war with the Soviets would be global; that U.S. Navy forces should take the offensive worldwide; that forward offensive naval operations could have a decisive effect on the outcome of a land war in Europe; and that U.S. Navy attack submarines (SSNs) would sink the Soviet Navy and put their nuclear-powered strategic ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) at risk.¹⁰

Sea Plan 2000 in turn contributed to the establishment of the Global War Game series in 1979. The Global games, as they came to be known, would run until 2001. They would serve as one of the Navy’s key venues for examining strategy, operations,

⁹ On the “Turner Revolution,” the Naval War College in the 1970s, and wargaming at the Naval War College, see John B. Hattendorf, B. Mitchell Simpson, III, and John R. Wadleigh, *Sailors and Scholars: The Centennial History of the U.S. Naval War College* (Newport RI: Naval War College Press, 1984).

¹⁰ Hattendorf, Simpson, and Wadleigh, *Sailors and Scholars*; and West email, 5 August 2014. On *Seaplan 2000*, see Hattendorf, *Evolution of the U.S. Navy’s Maritime Strategy*; and John B. Hattendorf (ed.), *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1970s: Selected Documents*, Newport Paper #30 (Newport RI: Naval War College Press, September 2007).

and warfighting, and often explored ideas that deviated from the current strategy or policy.¹¹ Over the next several years, the Global games offered senior leaders in the Navy and throughout the interagency the opportunity to test and explore the concepts established in *Sea Plan 2000* and aspects of a possible war with the Soviet Union. The Global games served as a forum for exploring innovative concepts of operational art, and helped reinvigorate the wargaming tradition at the Naval War College in Newport. This goal was in line with Hayward's ambition of rebuilding the institution's intellectual stature and reputation. By facilitating the strategic dialogue about naval operations and laying the foundation for this dialogue at Newport, *Sea Plan 2000* and the Global War Game series helped shape the conditions for the establishment of the SSG a few years later.

The final element to pave the way for the founding of the SSG was the change in administration in 1981, following Ronald Reagan's election as President of the United States. Reagan ran a campaign anchored in the belief that there had to be an across-the-board increase in U.S. defense spending and a more aggressive stance in matters of policy and strategy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. In particular, Reagan and his supporters wanted a major increase in the U.S. Navy's fleet, which would provide a robust domestic political and national security environment conducive to the establishment and influence of the SSG.¹²

The new Secretary of the Navy, Dr. John Lehman, was an ardent exponent of aggressive forward peacetime and crisis operations, and of greatly improved readiness for combat with the Soviets as close to their homeland as possible. Lehman empowered officers such as James A. "Ace" Lyons, who advocated for and adopted an aggressive deterrent stance against the Soviets, to implement aggressive forward peacetime exercises and crises operations, and readiness for war. These views gave naval substance to what Lehman already believed at the policy and strategic levels.¹³ As newly appointed commander of the U.S. Second Fleet, Lyons spent the summer of 1981 drilling his fleet—including elements from allied nations—in preparation for a dynamic new forward exercise in the North Atlantic, South Atlantic, Norwegian Sea,

¹¹ On the Global games, see Bud Hay and Bob Gile, *Global War Game: The First Five Years*, Newport Paper #4 (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1993); Robert H. Gile, *Global War Game: Second Series: 1984-1988*, Newport Paper #20 (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2004); and "'Global' U.S. Navy Title X War Game Series," U.S. Naval War College website, accessed 22 September 2015.

¹² On the Reagan administration, see especially Francis H. Marlo, *Planning Reagan's War: Conservative Strategists and America's Cold War Victory* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2012).

¹³ On Lehman's thinking and agenda, see his *Command of the Seas* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988).

and Barents Sea in the fall: Ocean Venture 81. This aggressive exercise would take place just as the first SSG was settling in at Newport.¹⁴

Bob Murray's concept

In his position as Under Secretary of the Navy, Bob Murray had seen these strategic changes unfolding and identified a gap in the Navy's thinking. As special assistant to Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger, Murray saw how the Army reinvented the European land campaign against the Soviets via the Air-Land Battle concept. This new concept was supported at the highest echelons of the Defense Department and by the use of carefully crafted exercises to test and implement it. In the Navy, however, Murray noted that officers tended to fall into two categories: those who thought tactically, and those who thought in broad strategic terms. Few had mastered the operational art that connected the two.

Murray envisioned an organization that he called the Center for Naval Warfare that would be based in Newport and would "serve as a focal point, stimulus, and major source of strategic thinking, ... drawing on the intellectual resources of the Navy, other U.S. government activities, the academic world, and foreign countries to promote an enduring renaissance in naval strategic thought."¹⁵ The Center would be staffed by potentially upwardly mobile O-5 and O-6 grade officers selected personally by the CNO and the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) to spend a year studying strategy, the operational level of war, and warfighting. The group was to have a travel budget and access that would allow it to interact with military commands, government officials, and academics around the world. The group would also have access to sensitive intelligence and special access programs to ensure that its work was directly relevant to the Navy's operations.

Murray pitched this concept to CNO Hayward, who shared his concern about the lack of strategic and operational-level thinking in the Navy. In addition, Murray told Hayward that in order to have a chance at success, the CNO and Commandant of the Marine Corps would have to personally select the participants, and that there must be access not only to high levels of U.S. and foreign militaries and government

¹⁴ On the U.S. Navy and the 1980s, generally, see Peter M. Swartz with Karin Duggan, *The U.S. Navy in the World (1981-1990)* (Alexandria VA: CNA, December 2011). On *Ocean Venture 81*, see (despite some inaccuracies) Gregory L. Vistica, *Fall from Glory* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995): 129-137.

¹⁵ Draft white paper, "The Center for Naval Warfare at the Naval War College," unsigned and undated. A memo - Under Secretary of the Navy, Memorandum for the Chief of Naval Personnel, Subj: Center for Naval Warfare, May 1, 1981 - with minor revisions followed.

agencies but also to sensitive intelligence and Navy special access programs, all enabled by a robust travel budget and acquisition of appropriate clearances by all the fellows.

Hayward agreed, and in June 1981 Murray relocated to Newport to serve as Dean of the Center for Naval Warfare Studies (CNWS) and Director of the Strategic Studies Group. The decision to locate the SSG at Newport was a natural one. Murray wanted the group to be away from Washington, where OPNAV's budget-oriented bureaucracy could force it to become yet another POM-justifying staff in the hierarchy. The Naval War College with its intellectual heritage was a prime candidate. In addition, Hayward was actively looking for opportunities to rejuvenate the reputation of the NWC. Murray was also welcomed by his long-time mentor, Naval War College President Rear Admiral Edward F. Welch, Jr., who was supportive of CNWS and its mission.

When CNWS was stood up, Welch reassigned several existing War College centers to it. The Center for Advanced Research (a research program for select students), the Center for War Gaming, and the Naval War College Press would all report to Murray, giving the SSG direct access to an array of analytical support that would prove essential to the group's success in coming years. Murray was particularly interested in the Center for War Gaming because of the naval intelligence detachment assigned to support it. This detachment would serve as the link to the intelligence and Navy special access programs—such as those being studied by the ATP—that Murray realized would be essential to making the SSG's work relevant to Navy operations. The War Gaming Center would provide support to the principal technique used by successive SSGs to explore and evaluate their concepts: wargaming.

Establishing the SSG

Even though Murray would officially continue to serve as Under Secretary until his replacement was confirmed by the Senate in September, he spent the summer of 1981 in Newport getting CNWS and the SSG up and running. At this point, the exact function and operations of the SSG had not been determined, and much of its first year was dedicated to defining exactly what the SSG was and how it would work. The process was often experimental, but the success of SSG I blazed a trail for each subsequent cadre.

Hayward personally selected six officers (naval air, surface, and submarine warfare specialists) whom he believed had the potential to become fleet commanders and

unified commanders-in-chief (CINCs).¹⁶ The Marine Corps assigned two Marine colonels, one aviator and one ground officer. Hayward placed a premium on the academic and intellectual freedom afforded to the SSG. His plan witnessed some resistance from the “platform barons,” who expressed their concern that sending these officers to the NWC for a year would ruin their careers. The submariners were notably obstinate, as the submarine community was defined by a particularly rigorous and scripted career pattern. Despite the objections, Hayward sent his desired mix of officers to Newport.¹⁷

As the first cadre of fellows arrived in Newport, Admiral Hayward offered no guidance for the group. The CNO was less interested in how the SSG operated and what it produced than in its ability to teach officers to think strategically and to stimulate strategic discourse within Navy leadership.¹⁸ According to Hayward, the SSG experience was to be developmental, not a staff job. The group's work began with an intense schedule of readings and lectures, accompanied by discussions of topics important to the Navy.

Murray's initial idea was that each fellow would produce individual papers, but the first SSG diverged from that pattern. As the fellows worked in the shared space at Newport, conducted games, and met with senior Navy leadership, the efforts of the group began to come together. By the end of the year, the SSG had developed an innovative campaign attacking Soviet strategic priorities to change Moscow's calculation of the nuclear and conventional correlations of forces, and providing leverage for terminating war without the use of nuclear weapons. It called for using combined-arms ASW operations to attack the Soviet Navy on NATO's northern flank and Soviet SSBNs in their bastions, linking command and control systems to roll back Soviet strategic air defenses, and controlling the air over northern Norway to allow U.S. carrier-based aircraft to move within striking range of Soviet targets. The results of SSG I's work impacted the highest echelons of the Navy, beginning with the CNO. The SSG came to prefer disseminating its results via briefings rather than publication; this served to promote strategic discourse among Navy leadership. The approach also served to acclimatize the SSG's ideas to the Flag officer community

¹⁶ Then, as now, the Navy had both three-star numbered fleet commanders and four-star Navy component commanders for major regional CINCs (now called combat commanders).

¹⁷ In contrast to Hayward's carefully manicured selection of officers, the CMC left the billeting to the Corps' personnel system, which tended to assign Marines who had just completed a course of study at the Naval War College. That practice saved on PCS (Permanent Change of Station) travel costs but also ensured that Marines on the SSG were already particularly knowledgeable on policy and strategy issues.

¹⁸ Hanley, *Creating*, p. 20. For the names of the officers chosen for SSG I and each successive SSG, see Appendix A.

that deemed the new concepts provocative. The SSG also presented its findings to the Commanders in Chief (CINCs) Conference in October 1982. That presentation became a central point of discussion, alongside the newly drafted *Maritime Strategy* briefing created in OPNAV OP-603.¹⁹

Approach and methodologies

After Murray created the program from scratch with SSG I, the yearly program remained largely consistent through SSG XIV. The approach relied on several key elements: readings, lectures, and research; meetings with experts; war games; and interactions with high-level Navy activities and leadership.

The year began with an orientation period that included extensive readings and lectures by NWC faculty and outside experts. Readings included academic and professional literature, as well as classified material, including compartmented intelligence materials. These lectures continued throughout the year and expanded to include briefings from government officials and seminars led by non-NWC academics. The readings and academic interactions supplemented the research efforts of the fellows, who produced and exchanged a variety of internal documents that advanced the SSG's dialogue, learning, brainstorming, and debating throughout the year. The SSG used the resources of the NWC; the linkages were stronger in the early years when the SSG Director was also the Dean of CNWS, but faded when that relationship changed and the SSG was relocated away from the CNWS offices.

In addition to the standard academic interactions at the NWC, the fellows spent considerable time visiting other relevant academic institutions, forward commands and staffs, and non-government organizations. Murray recognized the importance of extensive travel to these institutions in Washington and around the world in order for the fellows to collect insights and be exposed to the broader strategic context for their work. The fellows met with senior U.S. government officials, military commanders, and their staffs, as well as foreign government agencies. Visits to commands and access to senior leaders remained a core feature of the SSG program through SSG XIV, although the agenda gradually included more meetings with partners throughout the interagency and non-governmental experts in academia and think tanks.

¹⁹ For this initial *Maritime Strategy* briefing, see John B. Hattendorf and Peter M. Swartz, *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1980s: Selected Documents*, Newport Paper #33 (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2008): 19-43.

Those directors who has served as ambassadors brought a particular level of engagement with diplomatic circles around the world to their SSGs. The more ecumenical approach to understanding the Navy’s strategic issues complemented the changing focus of the SSG as it turned away in the late 1980s from direct war with the Soviets to engaging partners on the Soviet periphery and eventually assessing the changing global order after the Cold War. Experienced SSG fellows could immediately understand and exploit the central value of meeting and engaging with senior commanders and their staffs who were assigned the nation’s forward presence, crisis response, and warfighting responsibilities, and therefore were currently, directly, and seriously immersed in the topics that the SSG was examining.

The SSG relied heavily on games, although the sorts of games it used changed over time in response to differing analytical needs. In the early SSG years—SSGs I and II, in particular—gaming offered a venue for testing the operations that the SSG had developed. The NWC had long enjoyed a reputation as a world center for wargaming and was undergoing a renewal of that reputation as the SSG stood up. The early SSGs were supported directly by the Center for War Gaming and used classic operational wargaming to develop new concepts. As the later SSGs focused on the future and emerging challenges, they used path games and other games that emphasized decision-making in uncertain futures. Preparing for these games constituted a significant portion of the SSG’s research, as did writing the game reports. Games provided an active endeavor that operationally oriented and experienced naval officers could relate to and benefit from, and they offered a beneficial supplement to listening to lectures, reading, or discussing issues in seminars. These games also enabled the SSG fellows to conduct supporting operations and campaign analyses.²⁰

The final key element of the SSG program—and the one that was unique to the SSG experience—was the persistent engagement in high-level Navy activities. The SSG fellows participated in the Navy’s most prominent senior-level events, such as the Navy CINCs Conferences, Global War Games, International Seapower Symposia, Current Strategy Forums, conferences conducted by NWC and the Center for Naval Analyses, Navy Long-Range Planning, and Cooke Strategy Conferences. The SSG’s closeness to the CNO gave the fellows access to the highest echelons of Navy leadership, including the Secretary of the Navy.

Another aspect of the SSG’s engagement with high-level Navy activities was that all fellows were cleared for special intelligence and special access programs related to

²⁰ See also J.S. Hurlburt, “War Gaming at the Naval War College, 1969-1989,” *Naval War College Review* (Summer 1989): 46-51.

their study. CNOs wanted the fellows primarily to develop their own knowledge, skills, and insights, but also to stimulate serious dialogue throughout the Navy leadership on Navy policy, strategy, and operations. For this reason, it was deemed necessary for the SSG fellows to have the access and clearances that allowed them to see the most current information available to the U.S. Navy. Briefings by the intelligence community and other staff officers ensured that the SSG was well versed in the most recent developments and issues facing the Navy. This exposure also showed many SSG members that the experts did not have—or could not agree on—good answers to many of their questions; the SSG members would have to come up with answers on their own. This access also helped the fellows provide the CNO personally with concepts and insights that would help him and the Navy better carry out its missions and influence the U.S. defense establishment.

Following the fellows' year on the SSG, the CNO personally approved their assignments to their next billets in order to take advantage of their education and to implement concepts that they had developed. The SSG fellows continued to use their unique experience to shape Navy, joint, and DoD policies and strategies as they progressed through their careers.

The Work of SSG I–XIV

This section details the activities of SSGs I–XIV, emphasizing each group’s mandate, its unique features, its impact, and any notable developments that affected the conduct of a particular group, or that contributed to the evolution of the SSG as an institution. In the interest of brevity, many of the details contained elsewhere have been omitted below. The members of each SSG, for example, are listed in Appendix A. Other available details can be found in *Making Captains of War*.

SSG I

SSG I (1981-1982), convened by CNO Admiral Hayward, developed warfighting strategy aimed at defeating the Soviets, especially in the Norwegian Sea campaign, while avoiding nuclear escalation by either side. The SSG studied the war plans for NATO’s northern, southern, and central theaters, Southwest Asia, and the Pacific through their war games and visits with major commands. Through their meetings with fleet commanders, SECNAV Lehman, and the ATP, the SSG fellows came to the conclusion that the Navy had no coherent global strategy for fighting the Soviets, despite the fact that the Soviets had a coordinated approach across their theaters of military operations. The SSG proposed that using combined-arms ASW and networking the U.S. and NATO sea, air, and ground surveillance and command systems could allow the Navy to fight forward, negate Soviet combat stability, and change the conventional and nuclear correlations of forces. The final product would become known for its revamping of the naval war plans for the Norwegian Sea battle against the Soviet Union.²¹

CNO Admiral Hayward ensured that SSG fellows would be assigned either to command or to critical staff positions in OPNAV, especially OP-095, his newly

²¹ For an unclassified treatment, see Robert S. Wood and John Hanley, “The Maritime Role in the North Atlantic,” *Naval War College Review* (Nov-Dec 1985): 5-18. Reprinted in James L. George (ed.), *The U.S. Navy: The View from the Mid-1980s* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1985), and *Atlantic Community Quarterly* (Summer 1986): 133-144.

expanded Directorate of Naval Warfare. For example, CAPT Owens became Executive Assistant (EA) to OP-095, CAPT Leeds was assigned as Chief of Staff of the U.S. Sixth Fleet, and CAPT Cebrowski went to command.

SSG II

SSG II (1982–1983) was hand-picked by outgoing CNO Admiral Hayward but served during the first year of Admiral James Watkins' tenure as CNO.²² SSG II built on the strategy established by SSG I, and added operational concepts and tactics for maintaining aircraft carriers forward in the eastern Mediterranean and northwest Pacific, gaining sea control, and striking Warsaw Pact forces and Soviet airfields at the outset of war. The group refined the previous year's work and added new concepts to the Navy's kit of operational art and tactics. One such concept was that of "havens"—the use of islands, peninsulas, bays, and fjords to conceal carriers from Soviet radars to prevent targeting by anti-ship cruise missiles. This concept operationalized research done by the Center for Advanced Research and paralleled experimental tactics being tested in the fleets. Although the SSG members developed the tactic through their study of the Mediterranean, it was also well suited for fighting in the fjords of the northern theater and the islands of the northern Pacific. Because of the SSG's position, it was able to introduce these concepts at the strategic level and disseminate them throughout the Navy leadership so as to give them enduring value.

SSG II also collaborated with U.S. Air Force to develop a list of "targets that count"—i.e., Soviet targets that would most greatly impact the Soviets' ability to move large ground formations and support their maritime theaters. After its initial development by the SSG, this approach evolved into what the Joint Warfare Analysis Center would call "effect-based operations." Like their predecessors, SSG II fellows were reassigned to command or to key staff positions in OPNAV, especially OP-095.

SSG III

By its third year of existence, the SSG had required additional institutional definition. To clarify the role of the SSG and its place, CNO Admiral James D. Watkins

²² On Admiral Watkins as CNO, see Frederick H. Hartman, *Naval Renaissance: The U.S. Navy in the 1980s* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1990).

designated the SSG “the Navy’s focal point on framing strategic issues and the conceptualization/development of concepts for naval strategy and tactics.” Watkins also made clear to the Navy leadership that the SSG worked directly for him, would receive tasks only through him, and would report directly to him. Finally, Watkins established that all SSG fellows would sign an agreement to remain on active duty for two years following assignment to the SSG, and that their next assignments would be to OPNAV or a major command in order to best leverage the strategic experience of their participation in the SSG. SSG III also saw Professor Robert Wood relieve Bob Murray as the SSG Director.²³

Building on the strategy and concepts for operating in the maritime theaters surrounding the Soviet Union developed by the first two SSGs, SSG III (1983–1984) looked for other issues requiring the CNO’s attention. Strategies for dealing with states such as Cuba and Libya in the event of war with the Soviets had not been fully developed; neither of the first two SSGs had addressed the Persian Gulf; and few commands in the Caribbean had thought through the contingency of war with the Soviets. On 23 October 1983, a truck bomb killed 241 Americans in Lebanon and the next day the United States invaded Grenada. The group observed invasion staff operations while visiting the Headquarters of Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Forces Atlantic (CINCLANT).

SSG III recognized that U.S. forces would have to fight the Soviets, rather than Soviet client states. So, they decided to explore how the United States could use its military, economic, and diplomatic instruments in concert to deal with Cuba and Libya without distracting from war with the Soviets. The group treated “gray area” operations that occupied naval forces on a regular basis, such as those in the Levant, similarly. As with previous SSGs, their interactions led to the broader discussions of strategy and improving operational plans.²⁴ SSG III alumni were reassigned to similar billets as their predecessors. One member of the group, CAPT Larry Seaquist, went to OPNAV to head up the Navy’s strategy branch (OP-603), ensuring synergy between OPNAV and SSG thinkers as the *Maritime Strategy* matured.

²³ For Murray’s views on his SSG experience, see Robert J. Murray, “A Warfighting Perspective” (Interview), U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* (October 1983): 66-81.

²⁴ For an unclassified version of some of their findings, see CAPT Andrew Jampoler, “A Central Role for Naval Forces?...to Support the Land Battle,” *Naval War College Review* (November-December 1984): 4-12.

SSG IV

Whereas the first three SSGs determined their own topics of study, Watkins tasked SSG IV to work in conjunction with a select team from the OPNAV staff to develop a strategy and plans for using naval and joint forces to deter Soviet aggression. Watkins believed in his moral responsibility to deter war with the Soviets, and he personally supported President Reagan to establish the Strategic Defense Initiative. He asked the SSG to explore methods of deterring the Soviets both from considering the use of force and from employing armed force during a crisis. Though the Navy had been conducting deterrence operations as opportunities arose, the SSG/ATP efforts resulted in detailed Navy and joint plans and operations intended to cause the Soviets to doubt their ability to prevail in the event of war.

SSG V

By 1985, CNWS was growing. Wood became concerned that the bureaucracy of CNWS could consume the SSG, turning it into just another think tank. The SSG worked directly for the CNO, whereas CNWS worked for the college president. Therefore, he recommended a separate director for the SSG. Ambassador Marshall Bremant became the director in the fall of 1985, while Wood retained responsibility for the rest of CNWS. The SSG became a separate institution at the NWC, and coordination between the SSG and CNWS consequently was reduced.

Admiral Watkins tasked SSG V (1985-1986) to extend deterrence beyond warfighting, to the Soviets' attempts to extend their influence and to others who would use force to challenge U.S. interests and allies. He felt that national responses to crises were reflexive, typically sending aircraft carriers whether they were an appropriate response or not. He intended the strategy and plans to be national, involving other agencies (Departments of State, Commerce, Treasury, Energy, etc.) and branches of government, and the White House. SSG V developed methods for anticipating actions inimical to U.S. interests and evaluating naval options for deterring, preempting, or responding to such acts. The fellows developed templates for the Navy, CINCs, and other military services and agencies to use in preparing plans. SSG V anticipated acts such as the Iraqis' inadvertent attack on the USS *Stark* (FFG 31) on 17 May 1987.²⁵

²⁵ For an unclassified version of some of SSG V's work, see AMB Marshall Bremant, "Civilian-Military Relations in the Context of National Security Policymaking," *Naval War College Review* (Winter 1988): 27-32.

Admiral Watkins, however, did not have time to implement this approach, as the final recommendations and briefings to the Joint Chiefs of Staff came at the end of his tenure as CNO. Post-SSG assignments followed the established pattern, with, for example, CAPT Philip Boyer coming down to Washington to take over OP-603, OPNAV's strategy branch.

SSG VI

By 1986, the Navy's approach to its maritime strategy had matured considerably in its operations and exercises at sea, as well as in its plans and pronouncements. CAPT Larry Seaquist was leading the OPNAV strategy office, and both revised the existing strategy document and co-drafted a companion amphibious warfare strategy.²⁶ SECNAV John Lehman, CNO Watkins, and CMC General P. X. Kelley published an unclassified version of *The Maritime Strategy* as an addendum to the Naval Institute *Proceedings* in January.²⁷

In June 1986, Admiral Carlisle A. H. Trost succeeded Watkins as CNO.²⁸ Having served in OPNAV during the formation and early years of the SSG, Trost thought that CNOs Hayward and Watkins had managed the SSG well. He continued the practice of personally selecting fellows to attend the SSG and detailing them afterward. Emphasizing his personal relationship with the group, Admiral Trost made the SSG "a focal point of conceptual strategic and tactical thought for the CNO." Trost tasked SSG VI (1986-1987) to "Red Team" *The Maritime Strategy* to explore what the Soviets might do to counter it. SSG VI, playing Red, developed approaches for defeating the United States and then developed counters to that "worst case" strategy.²⁹

However, by that point, indications of the Soviet Union's demise were mounting. In January 1987, the SSG sponsored a conference at the NWC on the Soviet military in the year 2000. Top Sovietologists discussed social, economic, demographic, and political developments, followed by briefings from intelligence officers on Soviet military operational concepts and projected force structure. While Soviet society was deteriorating, their military leadership continued to develop concepts for quickly

²⁶ Hattendorf and Swartz, *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1980s*, 105-136.

²⁷ Hattendorf and Swartz, 203-258.

²⁸ On Admiral Trost, see Edgar F. Puryer, Jr., "Readiness—Carlisle Albert Herman Trost (1930-)," in John B. Hattendorf and Bruce A. Elleman (eds.), *Nineteen-Gun Salute* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2010): 203-218.

²⁹ For an unclassified treatment of their findings, see CAPT Dennis Blair, "The Strategic Significance of Maritime Theaters," *Naval War College Review* (Summer 1988): 29-40.

winning a conventional war with the West and the Soviet military industry continued to produce larger quantities of ever more sophisticated equipment. The SSG's focus on warfighting contributed to the professional development of the fellows assigned and provided intelligence indicators of possible Soviet military developments, but the group did not attempt to resolve the contradictions it observed between the Soviet military and Soviet society.

SSG VII

Trost had benefitted from living, studying, and traveling overseas in his assignments as an Olmsted scholar and military assistant to the Under Secretary of Defense and Under Secretary of the Navy. Like Hayward, Trost viewed broadening the education of future Flag officers as the greatest benefit of the SSG. Therefore, he assigned SSG VII (1987–1988) to study the political-military developments in the Pacific. Some officers in the Pentagon wanted to leave bases that were becoming difficult to negotiate—as Gorbachev opened the Soviet Union, it seemed to many to be less threatening, and conversations about U.S. basing became harder in Europe and Asia. SSG VII emphasized the continued value of forward bases, deployments, and presence. SSG VII did not accept fundamental assumptions regarding the behavior of allies in war plans for the Soviets and North Koreans, fomenting debate on whether they should be assumptions or objectives. Discussions at U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) with SSG VII resulted in the commander agreeing that the reliability of allies in supporting U.S. operations should be an objective, not an assumption, in the plans. This presaged the development of Cooperative Engagement in PACOM, which led to Theater Engagement (now Theater Security Cooperation) Plans in all combatant commands. Concerned with forward U.S. and allied naval forces conducting the types of operations that SSG IV had recommended, Gorbachev pressed for naval arms control.

SSG VIII

Trost assigned SSG VIII (1988–1989) to study the political-military developments in the Mediterranean/Mideast to parallel the previous year's work on the Pacific. Terrorist incidents carried out by a host of separatists and political extremists, and inspired by Islamic fundamentalism, had begun to rise. The United States needed its bases remaining from World War II and alliances designed for the Cold War in order to address a much broader range of contingencies. Similar to SSG VII, SSG VIII emphasized the continued value of forward bases, deployments, and presence. SSG VIII concluded early in its year that terrorism was the most likely contingency in the Mediterranean/Mideast over the coming years, while NATO's southern region was

becoming a springboard for action against the Soviets in the event of war as they pulled forces back from Central and Eastern Europe. SSG VIII saw the need to employ alliances developed to contain the Soviets for a broader range of contingencies, principally countering terrorism, as a key driver of future naval operations. SSG VIII members focused their travel on Egypt, Israel, and Turkey to address these concerns.

SSG IX

Robin Pirie relieved Ambassador Bremant as SSG Director in 1989. Also in that year, the NWC relocated the SSG from offices it shared with CNWS to the far side of campus, further separating the group from coordination with CNWS and the college. By this time, Trost was questioning the relevance of SSG I's and II's operational concepts that remained the foundations of *The Maritime Strategy* and the war plans, given the agenda of the new George H.W. Bush administration. He tasked SSG IX (1989–1990) to assess them in a 1994 timeframe considering the implementation of Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) and Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaties. SSG IX ran two war games in the fall of 1989—the first with existing NATO and Soviet/Warsaw Pact forces, and the second with those projected for 1994 (the Berlin Wall fell the week before the second war game). The first war game produced the usual result of rapid Soviet breakthrough and NATO retreat in Central Europe. The second showed that with smaller Soviet forces positioned further east, the NATO defenses held. SSG IX concluded that the canonical war that Europe had faced for 40 years was no longer feasible. The group recommended looking at other conflicts involving U.S. and Soviet interests, a recommendation that Admiral Trost concurred with.

Iraq became a focal point for the SSG. Saddam Hussein had just defeated Iran, Syria to his west was weak, and he had ambitions to become a new Arab Nasser. U.S. policy at the time was that Iran was the enemy and Iraq was helpful in dealing with Iran. While developing concepts for a war game, a senior intelligence official advised the SSG team that he would like the group to do a game involving Iraq invading Kuwait, even though it contradicted U.S. policy. In February 1990, using the academic freedom engendered by Hayward and sustained by subsequent CNOs, and with the encouragement of its new director, the SSG gamed the implications of Iraq invading Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The challenges for the United States in getting its forces to the war were immense, as were the challenges involved in convincing treaty allies to participate and in developing non-traditional warfighting coalitions. The U.S. Navy would be the first major force to reinforce the theater, but it had too few precision munitions for striking other than fixed targets to make a difference. The game indicated that Red teams, playing the Soviets, would need to rethink what they had come to know. The Red team suggested that accommodating the West to revive the Soviet economy while striving to play the role of a great power would dominate

Soviet thinking. One of the takeaways was that the Soviets had few incentives, and many disincentives, for supporting Iraq.

In March 1990, as the SSG briefed its results to commands involved in planning for the region, senior officers told members that they were mistaken in challenging U.S. policy. SSG IX presented its final briefs in June, just before another change in CNOs. Their work initially received little attention. Then, as Saddam positioned his units on the Kuwait border in July, just as U.S. intelligence officers had positioned them in the game, interest in the game rose. The SSG fellows and intelligence officer who had developed and played the game used the game materials in their future assignments and were called upon to brief game results and help prepare plans for Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM.

SSG X

Admiral Frank B. Kelso II became CNO in June 1990. The Warsaw Pact had collapsed, the Soviet Union itself was beginning to unravel, and many Americans were demanding a “peace dividend.”³⁰ Just as the services looked to rationalize their forces, the country looked for what would replace the frozen security environment and international relations that had remained largely fixed during the Cold War. Anticipating the end of World War II, the United States had fostered the creation of the United Nations (U.N.), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other institutions. What the United States would do following the end of the Cold War to promote security and peaceful development was an open question. Strategists in the Pentagon worked on their answers, contributing to President George H. W. Bush’s speech on a new world order at the Aspen Institute on 2 August 1990. Saddam Hussein had invaded Kuwait the previous day, overshadowing the speech and effectively putting post-Cold War international security initiatives on the back burner.³¹

Admiral Kelso recognized that *The Maritime Strategy* had outlived its usefulness as the central template for Navy strategic thinking.³² Needing a more up-to-date value proposition for the Navy, he tasked SSG X to study the future security environment

³⁰ On Admiral Kelso, see his oral history, *The Reminiscences of Admiral Frank B. Kelso II, U.S. Navy (Retired)* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 2009).

³¹ On the U.S. Navy and the 1990s generally, see Peter M. Swartz with Karin Duggan, *The U.S. Navy in the World (1991-2000)* (Alexandria, VA: CNA, March 2012).

³² On the successors to *The Maritime Strategy*, see John B. Hattendorf, *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1990s: Selected Documents*, Newport Paper #27 (Newport RI: Naval War College Press, 2006).

and its implications for the Navy and Marine Corps. SSG X (1990-1991) adopted a scenario planning technique developed by Royal Dutch Shell that looked at broad economic, demographic, energy, resource, environmental, technological, and social trends out to 2010, and identified what they saw as implications for international security and the naval forces. Some hoped to have the Navy adopt scenario planning as a strategic planning technique, similar to the way that Shell used it. However, Kelso had turned to Total Quality Leadership (TQL) as the Navy's approach to strategic planning, based on Edward Deming's "Total Quality Management" theories. SSG X initiated the practice of writing unclassified (For Official Use Only) reports and distributing them widely, rather than writing highly classified reports distributed to a very limited audience approved by the CNO.

SSG XI

SSG XI (1991-1992) continued SSG X's work, focusing it more specifically on trends involving allies and potential adversaries with an emphasis on military forces. SSG XI argued that no peer competitor was on the 20-year horizon and that naval operations would mostly involve power projection from the littorals and complex contingencies. Like SSG X, SSG XI decided to focus its efforts on providing the context for developing Navy strategy and plans rather than engaging in debates regarding specific future Navy platforms. Also like SSG X, the group emphasized that military power needed to be integrated with other elements of national power, and employed with other like-minded nations to protect and sustain the global, inter-connected system. U.S. leadership would be a major determinant of the future.

Admiral Kelso had just agreed to reduce the Navy from the Cold War target of 600 to a Base Force of 450 ships, devised by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, U.S. Army. SSG XI briefed Kelso that continuing to do business the way that the military-industrial-congressional enterprise had done since WWII would result in the Navy having closer to 250 ships by 2012. But Kelso's time and energy were consumed by adjusting to evolving post-Goldwater-Nichols Act relationships within DOD, the Tailhook scandal, fallout from the Navy's investigation of the USS *Iowa* (BB-61) turret explosion, and other issues of the day. He had difficulty accepting SSG XI's analysis of the likely size of the future Navy.³³

³³ On the Navy's bumpy transition in its strategic thinking during this period, see Captain Peter Haynes, *Toward a New Maritime Strategy* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2015).

SSG XII

Under a new director, Ambassador Frank McNeil, SSG XII (1992-1993) continued the effort to understand what the nation and the Navy could do to sustain U.S. influence, as its share of the world's economy diminished and its forces dwindled. Again, they looked to whole-of-government approaches and to employing the kinds of institutions that the United States put in place following World War II (the United Nations, World Bank, alliances, etc.).

The major theme of the SSG strategy was one of global engagement to shape a new security structure. The strategy included: steps to reinforce U.S. interagency processes, shifting from responding to crises to shaping events to head off crises; steps to encourage major power cooperation for global security with a special emphasis on the ability of the U.N. to establish and enforce order; ways to leverage military forces by matching doctrine to capabilities and reorganizing naval, joint, and combined forces to address 21st century realities; and an investment strategy to preserve the readiness of our forces to meet a wide range of global security demands in the near term and ensure our ability to handle any peer competitor over the long term. Recommendations for the sea services (Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard) were: to sustain and enhance military influence abroad and sustain the interagency process, including assigning quality officers to the State Department, NSC, and other government agencies; to educate sea service officers in naval diplomacy; to consider temporary appointments to Flag for officers serving on combined staffs; and to create a Navy foreign area officer program.

Under continuing pressure from his many other concerns, detailed above, Kelso could give little attention to pursuing many of SSG XII's ideas. He took SSG XII's brief but directed no action. However, when CMC General Carl Mundy received the brief a week later, he recommended that the SSG take it to the Joint Staff and OSD, who recommended that they take it to the National Security Advisor. Kelso approved those briefings, and the SSG XII received significant interest in implementing their ideas.

SSG XIII

Admiral Kelso left it to SSG XIII (1993-1994) to determine the focus for its study. The new Clinton administration's *Bottom Up Review* had mandated further force reductions, cutting the Navy to 400 ships, but U.N.-mandated operations increased.

Secretary of Defense Les Aspin made forward presence a criterion for force sizing, though no agreed-on intellectual foundation existed. Paralleling a study by OPNAV OP-06, SSG XIII decided to look at naval presence and influence.³⁴

The group made a distinction between military influence and decisive force, illustrating how decisive force could not resolve many post-Cold War security issues such as terrorism and nuclear weapons proliferation. It then expanded upon Thomas Schelling's concepts of deterrence and compellence in *Arms and Influence* to include incentives for behaving in ways congruent with U.S. interests. SSG XIII's strategic studies and operational backgrounds led to novel concepts that would allow naval forces to remain on station longer so that fewer forces could provide more influence.

Whereas OPNAV treated all current Navy policies and practices as fixed, the SSG treated them as variables that impacted forward forces. The SSG's innovative concepts appeared to some to undermine OPNAV's calculations and arguments for a specific number of Navy surface ships. After Kelso's critics forced his retirement a few months early, Admiral Jeremy M. (Mike) Boorda relieved him as CNO in April 1994. Boorda preferred OPNAV's analysis to SSG XIII's.

SSG XIV

Admiral Boorda assigned SSG XIV (1994-1995) to bound the possibilities for the security environment in 2005, and then in March 1995 tasked them to make predictions and recommend what he should do with his remaining three years as CNO. SSG XIV presented the CNO with recommendations at three levels: inputs to national policy formulation; at the CINC level through JCS and Service Chief functions; and in terms of Service Chief responsibilities to organize, train, and equip naval forces. Their approach included a global overview, regional overviews, predictions and recommendations, and wildcards to test key assumptions. The group recommended: continued enhancement/integration of national intelligence capabilities, particularly HUMINT, with priority going to the Middle East, North Africa, WMD, terrorist movements, and international crime (to include drug cartels); support to improvements in the U.N.'s ability to respond to peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts, while focusing the U.S. contribution on its unique competencies (e.g., heavy lift and C4I); greater emphasis on working with other government agencies, and including them in military exercises and/or scheduling recurring conferences; revitalizing the Navy political-military community, including

³⁴ The essence of the OP-06 study is in Rear Admiral Philip A. Dur, "Presence: Forward, Ready, Engaged," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* (June 1994): 41-44.

foreign affairs and military and organizational strategic planning; and incorporating military-to-military contacts as an explicit part of U.S. strategy to expand our influence.

SSG Transition

CNO Boorda began the process of changing the focus of the SSG to naval innovation. Boorda had had experience with the SSG as far back as 1985, when he was CNO Watkins' Executive Assistant, and had been critical of the organization. When he became Chief of Naval Personnel in August 1988, he recommended that CNO Trost use the talent devoted to the SSG for other pressing Navy needs. In the early 1990s, ideas about the "Revolution in Military Affairs" became popular in U.S. defense circles, which prompted a focus on exploiting emerging capabilities of the information age to deliver precise, long-range weapons, achieving greater effects with fewer forces. Kelso tasked his CNO Executive Panel (CEP) to study naval warfare innovation to create a revolution in naval affairs, and a briefing on this effort in 1994 impressed Admiral Boorda while he was Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Europe. Around the same time he received a briefing of SSG XIII's work, which he criticized as being too "pol-mil" and not enough "mil-pol."

As Admiral Boorda took over as CNO, the OPNAV staff suggested other configurations and organizational arrangements for the SSG, such as making the members staff officers responsive to OPNAV. Members of the CEP on the naval warfare innovation task force thought that the SSG would be best used generating revolutionary naval warfare concepts enabled by emerging technology. Beginning in 1995, the emphasis of the SSG transformed from offering education to prepare future three- and four-star officers and promoting strategic debate, to delivering tangible products to the CNO. In the spring of 1995, Admiral Boorda asked Admiral James R. Hogg, USN (Retired), to take over as Director of the SSG. Ambassador McNeil stepped down. Following the CEP's final brief, he tasked Hogg to use the SSG to implement the CEP's recommendations for forming concept-generation teams to focus on naval warfare innovation. The CNO turned the SSG from broadening its members' outlooks, studying strategy, and promoting strategic discourse, to generating innovative naval warfare concepts.

Admiral Boorda took his life in May 1996, and Admiral Jay L. Johnson (a fellow on SSG IX) followed him as CNO. On the advice of Admiral Hogg and members of the CEP, Johnson changed the function of the SSG in 1997 to focus solely on naval warfare innovation. The SSG no longer aimed to provide an opportunity for promising naval officers to study strategy and naval operations on their way to eventual fleet and CINC commands. Nor did the SSG have a role any longer in stimulating discourse and debate on maritime strategy and operations among Navy leaders.

Value, Impact, and Success

Over the course of this study, CNA conducted interviews with dozens of former SSG fellows, directors, and staff members, and all living CNOs who either oversaw SSGs I-XIV or served on one as a fellow. To a person, they spoke highly of the value of the SSG and its impact on their career, and freely offered their perspectives on the reasons for its success. These perspectives are documented thoroughly in the associated information memorandum. In this section, we explore the value, impact, and success of SSGs I-XIV.

CNO Engagement

Much of the success of the SSG is linked to its close association with the CNOs and with their engagement with the SSG fellows. The SSG reported directly to CNOs in fact and on paper. The fellows arrived in Newport having been handpicked by CNOs, who generally picked warfighting officers they believed had strong potential to command fleets and joint forces. Few fellows actively sought placement on the SSG initially; some even (unsuccessfully) tried to avoid it, fearing that it would damage their career trajectory. Over the course of each year, CNOs met with the fellows multiple times, typically once early in the year and then about every two months. CNOs also met with fellows to receive an outbrief of their work at the end of each SSG term.

CNO approaches to the SSG changed over time and had a direct impact on the relevance and mission of the SSG. Admiral Hayward provided considerable support to the SSG, enabling members to meet with high-level Flags and giving them a platform at the CINCs Conferences, for example. Without the clear and emphatic support of CNO Hayward, backed up by the door-opening power of Bob Murray—the most recent former Under Secretary of the Navy—the nascent SSG likely would not have had the resources, access, or legitimacy to firmly establish itself as an influential strategic institution. Admirals Watkins and Trost continued this high level of support. Admiral Kelso, however, was unable to support the SSG to the same extent, as he was frequently preoccupied with crises (i.e., the Tailhook scandal and the *Iowa* incident). Admiral Boorda believed that the SSG had lost its utility, and changed its function and focus after being dissatisfied with two successive SSG reports.

Typically, the CNO assigned the SSG to study a topic, although this was not always the case. Particularly in its early days, the fellows were given complete freedom to set their own agenda with guidance from the director and staff. As the pioneering cadre, SSG I received no guidance from CNO Hayward. Nor did CNO Watkins assign topics to SSGs II or III. Starting with SSG IV, Admiral Watkins assigned the SSG a topic of study, and CNOs Trost and Kelso continued this practice until SSG XIII. Notably, SSG IX's topic of study changed in reaction to the fall of the Berlin Wall and other developments signaling the military decline of the Soviet Union.

The level of support that the SSG provided to the CNO also varied over time. The SSG offered strong support to Admiral Hayward, although he did not particularly seek it out. Admiral Watkins relied heavily on the SSG and subsequently received a high level of support from the group. Admiral Trost also received significant support from the group, although Admiral Kelso, again, spent a disproportionate amount of time on issues that prevented him from engaging with the SSG. The SSG proved unable to satisfy Admiral Boorda's expectations in its earlier form.

Yet overall, SSG fellows, having risen to senior grades in the Navy, understood well the importance of their direct link to the CNO, his own guarding of that link, and the trust and confidence he had placed in them. They consequently strove to meet his expectations, and to yield products that could benefit the Navy and the nation as a whole, as well as benefitting the CNO's immediate individual needs and their own professional careers.

The SSG product

While the SSG produced a written report every year, the fellows relied more on their briefings and associated slides to convey their findings and recommendations to the CNO and the rest of the Navy. The fellows briefed interim progress to the CNO, allowing him to make course corrections and provide other feedback. Their briefings to other senior Navy leadership also promoted frank dialogue with and feedback from key stakeholders in the Navy, who were usually positive and receptive, though occasionally negative and unsupportive. These meetings with senior Navy leadership allowed the SSG to test their ideas, solicit input, and encourage conversation about the Navy's strategic and operational issues as part of their annual research. For these reasons, the briefing format was conducive to the SSG's role as a pollinator of strategic and operational concepts throughout the Navy.

The final reports of the SSGs were usually completed by the staff or a rump group of late-departing fellows. The reports of SSG I-IX were mostly Top Secret with a limited distribution. SSG X-XIV's reports were unclassified and saw a wider distribution. Still, most copies of SSG reports have been destroyed over time, and none are known to have been digitized. Occasionally, SSG fellows or staff would publish articles in

scholarly and professional journals, and these would typically be the result of the SSG's work.

Impact of the SSG

Arguably the most impactful product of the SSG was the further careers of the fellows themselves, who in turn helped to shape the U.S. Navy and broader U.S. government. Having completed their year at Newport, SSG fellows brought their data, insights, experiences, and contacts with them to their subsequent assignments. The CNOs approved the fellows' follow-on assignments, which were typically to influential OPNAV billets (OP-095, OP-07, N-7, OP-00K, OP-603, OP-801) in the early years and to the Joint Staff after the implementation of Goldwater-Nichols. Nearly half of the fellows in SSGs I-XIV (43 of 88, or 49 percent) were promoted to Flag rank, and eight of these went on to serve as four-star officers. In 2000, 30 percent of Navy four-star officers were SSG alumni. Some rose to senior positions in the Navy and throughout the U.S. government and testify to having used their SSG experience in those positions. The SSG experience still had influence in 2015, when CNO Jonathan Greenert promulgated his maritime strategy document, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower: Forward, Engaged, Ready*, which was influenced by the work that he had done during SSG XIII.³⁵

SSG fellows contacted for this study emphasized the unique knowledge and experience that the SSG provided. Meeting the day-to-day demands of operating ships, submarines, and aircraft squadrons had left them little time to study broader issues of strategy and theater-level operations. Though they were recognized experts in their warfare areas, working with other handpicked experts from different specialties, including Marines, gave them a much deeper appreciation of the utility of naval forces and operations to the Nation. International travel and war games deepened their appreciation of joint and coalition forces and of other nations' interests. Interaction with leading academics and senior government officials deepened their appreciation of ongoing strategic debates and of issues and instruments involved in national, regional, and global security. Direct interaction with combatant and fleet commanders and access to the most closely held national intelligence enhanced their confidence and readiness to serve at the highest levels of command. Time on the SSG gave fellows great exposure to senior Navy leadership, and offered them both positive models to emulate and negative models to avoid. The experience also bolstered members' confidence in dealing with naval leadership at the highest echelons, and enhanced their own capabilities as future senior leaders.

³⁵ John Hanley and Peter Swartz, interview with Admiral Jonathan Greenert, 19 February 2015.

The extent to which the SSG influenced individual CNOs varied considerably. Admiral Hayward's strategic ideas had already been well formed, and his focus was principally on the direct benefit that the SSG experience would have on the fellows, and, through them, the Navy leadership and strategy, policy, and operations. CNOs Watkins and Trost, however, relied on the SSG to a great extent both to inform their strategic thinking and to influence senior Navy, joint, and national leadership. CNO Kelso was distracted by other issues and with dramatic geopolitical changes in the world. He was frustrated that he could not use more of the SSG's recommendations to help him solve problems, and he appreciated their efforts. CNO Boorda was skeptical of the value of the SSG to him and the Navy as the group was then currently constituted, and, in 1995, initiated a major change in the SSG's tasking, operation, organization, and desired output.

Observations on the SSG's success

The success of SSG I heavily influenced the subsequent development of the SSG and its further success. The first SSG not only provided a template for the progress and activities of future SSGs but also achieved an immediate reputation as a valued contributor to Navy thinking and action. This success created a positive environment in which subsequent SSGs could flourish. The CNO selected a cadre of naval officers known for their accomplishments and intellects, but the influence of Commanders Owens and Cebrowski in particular would leave indelible marks on the Navy for the next two decades. As the personal reputations of these two officers grew over the years, later SSG members benefitted from the association.

The SSG's success was also due to the receptive climate for war-winning operational concepts that existed in the U.S. Navy in the early 1980s. SSG I chose the topic of using maritime forces to make a strategic difference in a global conventional war with the Soviets, with a specific focus on the most demanding, challenging, and important campaign: the campaign for the Norwegian and Barents Seas and for Norway. This need not have been the case. The SSG could have grown slowly from modest beginnings to achieve fame and glory in mid-life, as other institutions have done. Instead, SSG I began with a stunning success and subsequent SSGs strove and often succeeded—to live up to the reputation of the original group.

The SSGs were more influential in studying central Navy deterrence and warfighting concepts during the Cold War than in studying future trends and crisis response after the Cold War ended. Throughout its history, the SSG was at the fore of the contemporary debates on the effective use of naval power. During the Cold War, however, those debates were of central concern to Navy leadership. After the Cold War (and after passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986), CNOs and other top Navy leaders were increasingly focused on Navy down-sizing, threat reduction, the Tailhook scandal, and restructuring the national security apparatus while manning,

training, and equipping the Navy.³⁶ Thus, their jobs demanded that they focus on matters other than what the SSG was studying.

What the SSG could have done better

Although Admirals Hayward and Watkins intended for the SSG to enhance the reputation of the NWC, institutional divides meant that that vision was not really achieved. The highly classified nature of some of the SSG's work meant that it could not be shared freely with most of the NWC faculty. Admiral Watkins cautioned the fellows not to share their work, so as to avoid the risk of sensitive programs being openly published. Although the SSG began as the centerpiece of the newly formed CNWS, the group effectively separated from the NWC at the beginning of its fifth year when the Dean of CNWS no longer directed the SSG. Physically separating SSG offices from CNWS in 1989 further exacerbated this split. Although the SSG worked directly for the CNO at the NWC, it did not become an integral part of the NWC, which limited the extent to which the NWC could benefit from the SSG's reputation.

During the 1990s, CNOs Kelso and Boorda felt little need for the advanced and alternative study of strategy. Both were consumed with maintaining a properly balanced and combat-ready Navy force structure—while downsizing—and designing Navy forces for the future, and Navy scandals and investigations distracted Admiral Kelso. The SSG fellows valued their role in briefing what they thought the CNO should hear and do. However, their studies of post-Cold War security and implications for the Navy did not resonate with the issues consuming the CNOs. This resulted in a change in the objectives and character of the SSG beginning in 1995.

Lessons learned

The first fourteen SSGs emphasized the education of future three- and four-star officers and on stimulating strategic thought at the highest echelons of Navy leadership. Should the Navy again consider establishing an organization to fulfill these functions, the following 14 lessons may contribute to its success:

- The CNO needs to personally want the group, engage frequently with it, use it, and take an active part in selecting fellows and assigning them to their next job.

³⁶ For more on this point, 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.

- The group must work directly for the CNO, and nobody else.
- Fellows need to be front-running, upwardly mobile senior officers with potential for growth.
- Size matters. The group must be kept small, with warfighters at the core.
- Naval contributions to joint warfighting need to be at the heart of the effort, with a focus on developing Navy policy, strategy, operations, and tactics as part of the joint force.
- Topics should deal with classified warfighting issues of current importance to the CNO, and fellows need to have access to intelligence and special access programs and concepts.
- The group must avoid participation in the Navy's Planning, Programming, Budget, and Execution (PPBE) process, but be aware of contemporary issues. It must avoid extensive futurology, but be aware of emerging trends.
- Fellows need access to top Navy and joint leaders and their staffs, especially those forward overseas. Consequently, they need a robust travel budget.
- The Naval War College is an ideal setting. But the CNO, NWC President, SSG staff, and NWC teaching and research faculty all have to work actively at maximizing the mutual benefits and breaking down stovepipes. That won't happen by itself just because the SSG is in Newport.
- The group must utilize wargaming as a primary tool for identifying and solving Navy warfighting problems. Gaming has several virtues, an important one being that it resonates with action-oriented naval officers.
- Gaming and overseas command access should be supplemented with operations analysis, lectures, seminars, civilian expert inputs, OPNAV meetings and briefings, and participation in ongoing high-level U.S. Navy events (e.g., Flag officer conferences, International Seapower Symposium, Current Strategy Forum).
- Classified briefings should be as the primary means of communicating SSG findings, supplemented by classified written reports and UNCLAS articles.
- The staff, especially the director and deputy director, must be chosen with great care. Experienced senior DOD civilian officials make especially good directors. The staff should always include an intel officer.
- It's best if a reborn old-style SSG starts with a bang—not just slowly evolves—in order to set a precedent for all that follow.

Appendix A: SSG Fellows by Year

Below, we list the years, topics, and members and directors of SSGs I-XIV.

SSG I (1981-82): Foundations of the Maritime Strategy – Norwegian Sea

Director: Robert J. Murray

Admiral William A. Owens, USN (Ret)

Vice Admiral Arthur K. Cebrowski, USN (Ret) (Deceased)

Rear Admiral Daniel J. Wolkensdorfer, USN (Ret) (Deceased)

Captain Franklin D. Julian, USN (Ret)

Captain Stuart D. Landersman, USN (Ret)

Captain Rene W. Leeds, USN (Ret)

Colonel Richard P. Bland, USMC (Ret)

Colonel Joseph D. Ruane, USMC (Deceased)

SSG II (1982-83): Maritime Campaigns for the Mediterranean and Pacific

Director: Robert J. Murray

Rear Admiral Edwin K. Anderson, USN (Ret)

Rear Admiral Clarence E. Armstrong Jr., USN (Ret)

Rear Admiral Michael A. McDevitt, USN (Ret)

Captain Ralph E. Beedle, USN (Ret)

Captain Joseph Hurlburt, USN (Ret)

Captain John H. Maurer, USN (Ret)

Colonel Myrl W. Allinder, USMC (Ret)

Colonel Theodore L. Gatchel, USMC (Ret)

SSG III (1983-84): Naval Strategy for Crisis Response: Libya/Cuba/Gulf

Director: Robert S. Wood

Rear Admiral Larry R. Marsh, USN (Ret)

Colonel William A. Hesser, USMC (Ret)

Captain Andrew C.A. Jampoler, USN (Ret)

Captain Richard L. Martin, USN (Ret)

Captain Frederick M. Pestorius, USN (Ret)

Captain Gordon G. Riggle, USN (Ret)

Captain Larry R. Seaquist, USN (Ret)
Colonel Edward V. Badolato, USMC (Ret)

SSG IV (1984-85): Naval Conventional Deterrence

Director: Robert S. Wood
Vice Admiral Jesse J. Hernandez, USN (Ret)
Captain James R. Lynch, USN (Ret)
Captain Thomas Murphy, USN (Ret)
Captain George O'Brien, USN (Ret)
Captain Will Rogers III, USN (Ret)
Captain Hal Sexton, USN (Ret)
Colonel Robert A. Browning, USMC (Ret)
Colonel Lawrence R. Medlin, USMC (Ret)
Colonel Edward J. Lloyd, USMC (Ret)

SSG V (1985-86): Pre-Crisis Planning and Deterrence

Director: Marshall Bremont
Program Director: John T. Hanley, Jr.
Admiral Leighton W. Smith, Jr., USN (Ret)
Vice Admiral John B. LaPlante, USN (Ret)
Rear Admiral Irve C. Lemoyne, USN (Ret) (Deceased)
Brigadier General Bertie D. Lynch, USMC (Ret)
Captain Robin Battaglini, USN (Ret)
Colonel Thomas A. Bowditch, USMC (Ret)
Captain Philip A. Boyer, III, USN (Ret)
Commander Dennis Carroll, USN (Ret)
Colonel Stephen E. Lindblom, USMC (Ret)

SSG VI (1986-87): Soviet Counters to the Maritime Strategy

Director: Marshall Bremont
Program Director: John T. Hanley, Jr.
Admiral Frank L. Bowman, USN (Ret)
Admiral Dennis C. Blair, USN (Ret)
General Anthony C. Zinni, USMC (Ret)
Vice Admiral Jerry L. Unruh, USN (Ret)
Rear Admiral Byron E. Tobin, Jr., USN (Ret)
Rear Admiral Alvaro R. Gomez, USN (Ret)
Captain Michael F. O'Brien, USN (Ret)
Colonel Randolph H. Brinkley, USMC (Ret)

Colonel James M. Puckett, USMC (Ret)

SSG VII (1987-88): Political-Military Developments in the Pacific

Director: Marshall Bremont

Program Director: John T. Hanley, Jr.

Vice Admiral William A. Earner, Jr., USN (Ret)

Vice Admiral Timothy W. Wright, USN (Ret)

Rear Admiral Thomas F. Hall, USN (Ret)

Rear Admiral William L. Putnam, USN (Ret)

Rear Admiral Thomas D. Ryan, USN (Ret)

Captain Ronald D. Gumbert, USN (Ret)

Colonel James J. Doyle, USMC (Ret)

Colonel William C. McMullen, USMC (Ret)

Colonel John A. Woodhead, USMC (Ret)

SSG VIII (1988-89): Political-Military Developments in the Mediterranean and Middle East

Director: Marshall Bremont

Program Director: John T. Hanley, Jr.

Rear Admiral Don Baird, USN (Deceased)

Rear Admiral Jon S. Coleman, USN (Ret)

Rear Admiral Mack C. Gaston, USN (Ret)

Rear Admiral Stephen I. Johnson, USN (Ret)

Captain Michael Farmer, USN (Ret)

Captain John Kieley, USN (Ret)

Colonel Richard Blanchfield, USMC (Ret)

Colonel Ronald Oates, USMC (Ret)

Colonel Jeffrey A. Wilson, USMC (Ret)

SSG IX (1989-90): Implications of an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia

Director: Robert B. Pirie

Deputy Director: John T. Hanley, Jr.

Admiral Jay L. Johnson, USN (Ret)

Vice Admiral Albert H. Konetzni, Jr., USN (Ret)

Rear Admiral Richard G. Kirkland, USN (Ret)

Captain Douglas P. Huth, USN (Ret)

Captain William J. Kane, USN (Ret)

Captain James W. Suhr, USN (Ret)

Colonel Sean K. Leach, USMC (Ret)

Colonel Dale S. Town, USMC (Ret)

Colonel Alfred J. Ponnwitz, USMC (Ret)

SSG X (1990-91): Strategic Environment and Naval Challenges to 2010

Director: Robert B. Pirie

Deputy Director: John T. Hanley, Jr.

Admiral Edmund P. Giambastiani, USN (Ret)

Vice Admiral Dennis V. McGinn, USN (Ret)

Rear Admiral William H. Wright, IV, USN (Ret)

Captain John A. Cassidy, USN (Ret)

Captain Charles B. Reigner, USN (Ret)

Colonel John H. Robertus, USMC (Ret)

Captain David Van Saun, USN (Ret)

Colonel George H. Benskin, USMC (Ret)

Colonel Jennings B. Beavers, USMC (Ret)

SSG XI (1991-92): 21st Century Security Challenges, Strategy, and Naval Roles

Director: Robert B. Pirie

Deputy Director: John T. Hanley, Jr.

Admiral Timothy J. Keating, USN (Ret)

Rear Admiral Stanley W. Bryant, USN (Ret)

Rear Admiral Raymond C. Smith, Jr., USN (Ret)

Captain John P. Collins, Jr., USN (Ret)

Captain James C. Holloway, USN (Ret)

Captain Michael F. Martus, USN (Ret)

Captain George D. Moore, USN (Ret)

Captain William Wilkinson, USCG

Colonel Dwight R. McGinnis, Jr., USMC (Ret)

Colonel Garrett V.H. Randel, USMC (Ret)

Colonel Lawrence Staak, USMC (Ret)

SSG XII (1992-93): Sustaining U.S. Influence into the 21st Century

Director: Francis J. McNeil

Deputy Director: John T. Hanley, Jr.

Vice Admiral Patricia A. Tracey, USN (Ret)

Rear Admiral Stephen R. Loeffler, USN (Ret)

Captain Mack C. Haley, USN (Ret)

Captain James M. Burin, USN (Ret)

Captain Rocklun A. Deal, USN (Ret)

Captain Lawrence E. Eddingfield, USN (Ret)

Captain R. Robinson Harris, USN (Ret)
Captain Norman Henslee, USCG (Ret)
Captain William H. Shurtleff, IV, USN (Ret)
Captain Thomas L. Travis, USN (Ret)
Colonel Robert A. Beaudoin, USMC (Ret)
Colonel Don D. Enloe, USMC (Ret)
Colonel Charles O. Skipper, USMC (Ret)

SSG XIII (1993-94): Overseas Military Presence

Director: Francis J. McNeil
Deputy Director: John T. Hanley, Jr.
Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, USN
Rear Admiral Barbara E. McGann, USN (Ret)
Rear Admiral Thomas R. Richards, USN (Ret)
Rear Admiral James A. Robb, USN (Ret)
Captain William L. Boyd, USN (Ret)
Captain Joseph H. Jones, USCG (Ret)
Captain John C. Scrapper, USN (Ret)
Colonel Allen T. Head, USMC (Ret)
Colonel Ross J. Hieb, USMC (Ret)

SSG XIV (1994-95): Bounding the International Security Situation in 2005

Director: Francis J. McNeil
Deputy Director: John T. Hanley, Jr.
Vice Admiral Ann Elisabeth Rondeau, USN (Ret.)
Rear Admiral Robert F. Duncan, USCG (Ret)
Rear Admiral Kenneth Floyd Heimgartner, USN (Ret)
Rear Admiral Robert Timothy Ziemer, USN (Ret)
Captain Jo Dee Catlin Jacob, USN (Ret)
Captain George Samuel Rhodes, USN (Ret)
Captain Lynn Gammon Wessman, USN (Ret)
Colonel David S. Burgess, USMC (Ret)
Colonel Richard Guy Barr, USMC (Ret)

Appendix B: SSG Topics of study

The following table records each SSG's dates, associated CNO, and topic of study. We document the topic, because some of the document titles have yet to be declassified.

SSG	Topic
SSG I (1981-82) ADM Thomas B. Hayward	Title: Topic: Foundations of the Maritime Strategy – Norwegian Sea Classification: Top Secret
SSG II (1982-83) ADM James D. Watkins	Title: Topic: Maritime Campaigns for the Mediterranean and Pacific Classification: Top Secret
SSG III (1983-84) ADM James D. Watkins	Title: Topic: Naval Strategy for Crisis Response: Libya/Cuba/Gulf Classification: Top Secret
SSG IV (1984-85) ADM James D. Watkins	Title: Topic: Naval Conventional Deterrence Classification: Top Secret
SSG V (1985-86) ADM James D. Watkins	Title: Topic: Pre-Crisis Planning and Deterrence Classification: Top Secret
SSG VI (1986-87) ADM Carlisle A. H. Trost	Title: Topic: Soviet Counters to the Maritime Strategy Classification: Top Secret
SSG VII (1987-88) ADM Carlisle A. H. Trost	Title: Topic: Political-Military Developments in the Pacific Classification: Secret
SSG VIII (1988-89) ADM Carlisle A. H. Trost	Title: Topic: Political-Military Developments in the Mediterranean and Middle East Classification: Secret

SSG IX (1989-90) ADM Carlisle A. H. Trost	Title: Topic: Fighting a smaller, more modern Soviet fleet; then changed to implications of an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia Classification: Top Secret
SSG X (1990-91) ADM Frank B. Kelso II	Title: Topic: Strategic Environment and Naval Challenges to 2010 Classification: Unclassified (For Official Use Only)
SSG XI (1991-92) ADM Frank B. Kelso II	Title: Topic: 21 st Century Security Challenges, Strategy, and Naval Roles Classification: Unclassified (For Official Use Only)
SSG XII (1992-93) ADM Frank B. Kelso II	Title: Topic: Sustaining U.S. influence into the 21 st Century Classification: Unclassified (For Official Use Only)
SSG XIII (1993-94) ADM Frank B. Kelso II	Title: Crisis Response and Influence: The Value of Overseas Military Presence Topic: Overseas Military Presence Classification: Unclassified (For Official Use Only)
SSG XIV (1994-95) ADM Jeremy M. Boorda	Title: Topic: Bounding the International Security Situation in 2005 Classification: Unclassified (For Official Use Only)

Appendix C: Interviews

The following table documents the interviews conducted in support of this study.

Date	Interviewee	Interviewer	Medium
24 Jun 2014	Hon. Robert B. Pirie	John Hanley and Peter Swartz	In-person
4 Aug 2014	CAPT AMB. Linton Brooks (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
5 Aug 2014	Hon. Robert J. Murray	Hanley, Chris Steinitz, Sam Oat-Judge, and Eric Davids	In-person
5 Aug 2014	RADM Mike McDevitt (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
8 Aug 2014	CAPT Robby Harris (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
11 Aug 2014	RADM Jim Stark (Ret.)	Hanley	Phone
24 Aug 2014	Dr. Robert Wood	Hanley	In-person
29 Aug 2014	Hon. Robert J. Murray	Swartz	In-person
17 Sep 2014	CAPT Mike Pestorius (Ret.)	Hanley	Phone
17 Sep 2014	CAPT Andy Jampoler (Ret.)	Hanley	Phone
18 Sep 2014	VADM Tim Wright (Ret.)	Hanley	Phone
18 Sep 2014	COL Ted Gatchel (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
7 Oct 2014	ADM Hayward (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
7 Oct 2014	CAPT Larry Seaquist (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
8 Oct 2014	CAPT Jim Patton (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
15 Oct 2014	CAPT Larry Seaquist (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
6 Nov 2014	ADM Denny Blair (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person

13 Nov 2014	Hon. Bob Murray	Hanley	In-person
14 Nov 2014	GEN Tony Zinni (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
14 Nov 2014	ADM Bill Smith	Hanley	In-person
17 Nov 2014	ADM Leighton "Snuffy" Smith (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
25 Nov 2014	Mr. Andy Marshall	Hanley	In-person
25 Nov 2014	Hon. Denny McGinn (VADM, Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
26 Nov 2014	Dr. Alf Andreasen and ADM William Studeman (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
28 Nov 2014	CAPT Mike Farmer (Ret.) and Dr. David Rosenberg	Hanley	In-person
28 Nov 2014	VADM Pat Tracey (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
3 Dec 2014	VADM Jack Dorsett (Ret.), SSG Intel Officer	Hanley	In-person
8 Dec 2014	CAPT Mike Martus (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
8 Dec 2014	ADM Ed Giambastiani (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
8 Dec 2014	VADM Ann Rondeau (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
9 Dec 2014	RADM Tom Marfiak (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
9 Dec 2014	Mr. Irv Blickstein	Hanley	In-person
11 Dec 2014	CAPT Jim Fitzsimonds (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
11 Dec 2014	ADM Jay Johnson (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
11 Dec 2014	RADM Barbara McGann (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
15 Dec 2014	ADM Skip Bowman (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
15 Dec 2014	CAPT Allen Banks (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
15 Dec 2014	ADM Jim Hogg (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
17 Dec 2014	RADM Skip Armstrong (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
18 Dec 2014	Mr. Jim Blaker	Hanley	In-person
19 Dec 2014	RADM Tim Ziemer (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
19 Dec 2014	CAPT Jeff Canfield (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
20 Dec 2014	ADM Bill Owens (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
22 Dec 2014	RADM Larry Marsh (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person

23 Dec 2014	VADM Tim Wright (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
29 Dec 2014	COL Andrew Hesser (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
12 Jan 2015	CAPT Rene "Sam" Leeds (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
13 Jan 2015	CAPT James Suhr (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
13 Jan 2015	RADM Jake Tobin (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
13 Jan 2015	VADM Al Konezni (Ret.)	Hanley and Floyd Kennedy	In-person
30 Jan 2015	ADM Tim Keating (Ret.)	Hanley	In-person
19 Feb 2015	ADM Carlisle Trost (Ret.)	Hanley, Swartz	In-person
19 Feb 2015	ADM Jon Greenert	Hanley, Swartz	In-person

Appendix D: Emails

Below is a list of email exchanges that yielded vital information documented in this report. An asterisk (*) denotes an exchange of multiple emails between the correspondents.

Date	Sender	Recipient
5 Aug 2014	Bing West	Peter Swartz
5 Aug 2014	Bing West	Peter Swartz
7 Aug 2014	Peter Swartz	John Hanley*
10 Sep 2014	Denny Blair	John Hanley
10 Sep 2014	Peter Swartz	John Hanley
14 Sep 2014	Ken McGruther	John Hanley
15 Sep 2014	Ken McGruther	John Hanley*
16 Sep 2014	Ken McGruther	John Hanley
18 Sep 2014	Peter Swartz	Ken McGruther, John Hanley, Christopher Steinitz
19 Sep 2014	Ken McGruther	Peter Swartz*
20 Sep 2014	ADM Leighton "Snuffy" Smith	VADM Bat Laplante
20 Sep 2014	VADM Bat Laplante	John Hanley
26 Sep 2014	Bing West	John Hanley*
3 Oct 2014	Ken McGruther	John Hanley
4 Nov 2014	Robby Harris	Peter Swartz
13 Dec 2014	John Hanley	RADM Skip Armstrong
14 Dec 2014	RADM Skip Armstrong	John Hanley

21 Dec 2014	Ken McGruther	Peter Swartz and Ken Kennedy
21 Dec 2014	Peter Swartz	John Hanley, Floyd Kennedy
18 Jan 2015	Bing West	John Hanley*
21 Feb 2015	Peter Swartz	John Hanley, Christopher Steinitz
22 Feb 2015	Peter Swartz	John Hanley
22 Feb 2015	VADM Bill Earner	John Hanley*
23 Feb 2015	CAPT Larry Seaquist	John Hanley

Appendix E: Workshop Participant List

The following is a list of participants in the CNO's SSG Workshop, held at the CNA 19-20 February, 2015. All participants had the opportunity to speak about their SSG experience and its impact on the Navy and their own careers.

SSG Directors

The Honorable Robert J. Murray (SSG I-II)	Dr. Robert S. Wood (SSG III-V)
The Honorable Robert B. Pirie, Jr. (SSG IX-XI)	Ambassador Francis J. McNeil (SSG XII-XIV)
Admiral James R. Hogg (SSG XV-XXXII)	VADM James Wisecup (SSG XXXIII-XXXIV)

SSG I Fellows

Admiral William A. Owens, USN (Ret)	Captain Rene W. Leeds, USN (Ret)
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SSG II Fellows

Rear Admiral Clarence E. Armstrong Jr., USN (Ret)

SSG III Fellows

Captain Frederick M. Pestorius, USN (Ret)

SSG IV Fellows

Colonel Robert A. Browning, USMC (Ret)

SSG V Fellows

Colonel Thomas A. Bowditch, USMC (Ret)	Captain Philip A. Boyer, III, USN (Ret)
Colonel Stephen E. Lindblom, USMC (Ret)	

SSG VI Fellows

Admiral Frank L. Bowman, USN (Ret)

SSG VII Fellows

Vice Admiral William A. Earner, Jr., USN (Ret)	Rear Admiral Thomas F. Hall, USN (Ret)
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SSG VIII Fellows

Rear Admiral Stephen I. Johnson, USN (Ret)	Captain Michael Farmer, USN (Ret)
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SSG IX Fellows

Captain James W. Suhr, USN (Ret)	Colonel Alfred J. Ponnwitz, USMC (Ret)
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SSG X Fellows

Vice Admiral Dennis V. McGinn, USN (Ret)

Colonel George H. Benskin, USMC (Ret)

SSG XI Fellows

(No representative)

SSG XII Fellows

Captain R. Robinson Harris, USN (Ret)

Colonel Charles O. Skipper, USMC (Ret)

SSG XIII Fellows

(No representative)

SSG XIV Fellows

Vice Admiral Ann E. Rondeau, USN (Ret)

Rear Admiral Bob Duncan, USCG (Ret)

Rear Admiral Robert T. Ziemer, USN (Ret)

Colonel Richard Guy Barr, USMC (Ret)

Captain Jo Dee Catlin Jacob, USN (Ret)

Captain Lynn Wessman, USN (Ret)

Other Participants

Captain Peter M. Swartz, USN (Ret), Center for Naval Analyses

Mr. Christopher Steinitz, Center for Naval Analyses

Mr. Floyd "Ken" Kennedy, Center for Naval Analyses

Dr. Eric V. Thompson, Center for Naval Analyses

Rear Admiral Thomas Marfiak, USN (Ret), Burdeshaw Associates

Dr. David Rosenberg, Institute for Defense Analysis

Mr. Steven T. Wills, Ohio University

Ensign Sam Oat-Judge USN, Center for Naval Analyses intern

Second Lieutenant Eric Davids USMC, Center for Naval Analyses intern

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SSG staff & fellow insights & findings

(informed by their SSG experience)

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