



# The sea: playground of the superpowers

On the maritime strategy of superpowers

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The sea: playground of the superpowers  
*The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS)*

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## On the maritime strategy of superpowers

*Captain (RNLN) E.H. Veen (drs.)*

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*The Hague* Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS) seeks to advance international security in an era defined by geopolitical, technological and doctrinal transformation and new security risks. HCSS provides strategic analysis and offers concrete policy solutions to decision makers. HCSS serves as a strategic planning partner to governments, international organisations and the business community.



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## Foreword

In the 'stories you missed in 2011', the American magazine *Foreign Policy* placed the build-up of the Indian armed forces at the top of the list. Last year, India was the main importer of arms. The Indian navy in particular is being modernised and enlarged at a rapid pace. Over the next twenty years, India will be spending 45 billion USD on 103 new warships. There even seems to be a race going on against China, which will be spending 25 billion USD on 135 new warships over the next twenty years. In the same period, China should also be getting carrier capacity, the basis for which was laid last year with the commissioning of an aircraft carrier from the assets of the former Soviet Union. A boundary had already been crossed earlier with the Chinese participation in counter-piracy operations off the Somali coast. For the first time since the beginning of the fifteenth century, Chinese warships have been deployed outside national coastal waters.

So what is going on? India and China are emerging economic superpowers. They have an unrelenting need for raw materials and energy. Both countries, but China in particular, dispute sea areas because of the presence of raw materials and energy. China in particular is teaming up with other countries, in Africa for example. The intention is to secure the supply of raw materials and energy. Those investments are interests which must be protected if necessary. All this dependence means that the trade routes are becoming more and more important. No wonder, therefore, that not only China, but also India are going all out to protect their SLOCs, building new bases in the Indian Ocean and making their armed forces expeditionary.

The development is passing post-modern Europe by. We have hardly any idea of the militarization that is taking place in Asia. For us, the principle of trade, rather than that of economic interests, is the dominant one. We have virtually no idea of increasingly frequent military confrontations, such as last August, when India and China came into conflict off the coast of Vietnam. And we are

scrapping ever larger elements of our defences, including our navies, because the world is supposed to be a safer place.

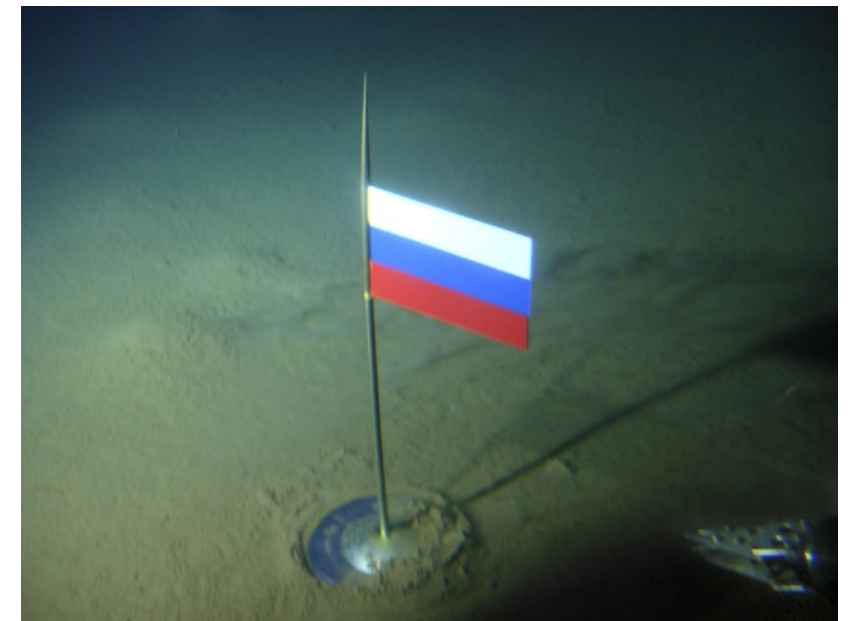
This paper is an important contribution to the development of vital knowledge in respect of the repercussions of the emergence of those new economic superpowers and the implications for our navies. This publication fits into a series of studies of the The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies on the developments that impact future maritime operations. Even though the author is not attached to HCSS, we were therefore glad to take care of this publication.

Rob de Wijk  
Director, *The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies*

*However beautiful the strategy,  
you should occasionally look at the results.*  
Sir Winston Churchill (1874 - 1965)

*Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory.  
Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.*  
Sun Tzu (c. 544–c. 496 BC)

*Power consists in one's capacity to link his will with the purpose  
of others, to lead by reason and a gift of cooperation*  
Thomas Woodrow Wilson (1856 - 1924)



RUSSIAN FLAG ON THE OCEAN FLOOR AT THE NORTH POLE

# Introduction

The balance between rich nations and emerging economies such as China, India and Brazil is shifting. The financial and economical crisis has only reinforced this shift. We are evolving into a complex, multipolar world in which balances of power are being redefined. It is important to recognise how and to what extent the various powers are reacting to that, as the shifting relations have irreversible implications for the deployment of our forces. During the so-called Future Policy Survey<sup>1</sup> conducted in 2010, scenario frameworks were used to work out the repercussions from the two major core questions:

- Is the global system evolving towards increasing cooperation and integration or towards disintegrating cooperation and fragmentation?
- Is our security mainly determined by states or by non-state actors?

With regard to these questions, it is an interesting development that emerging superpowers such as China, India and Brazil are taking to the seas ever more intensively. They build and buy ships not only to protect their own direct interests, but also to exert influence worldwide. India is acquiring and building aircraft carriers, India and China are taking part in counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and China is building a series of maritime support points in countries that border the Indian Ocean.

This publication tries to explain the logic of these developments. This is done on the basis of the maritime doctrines published by six emerging and existing superpowers. These doctrines are fundamental to recognize the underlying patterns for the coming years, which will provide operational commanders and maritime military stakeholders with a background context for their actions.

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<sup>1</sup> Netherlands Ministry of Defense, 'Eindrapport Verkenningen. Houvast voor de krijgsmacht van de toekomst', The Hague, March 2010.



This publication focuses on answering the question: **how and why are superpowers making their presence felt in the maritime domain?** The question of 'how' is the guiding one. The explanation as to 'why' consists mainly of a personal interpretation of national and international developments. I am also fully aware that this constitutes a 'snapshot', representing a particular moment in time. By placing the developments in a certain historical perspective, however, I have tried to go beyond this snapshot. In this way, I hope to have identified certain longer term trends which will become very much more visible in the coming years.

It became clear to me that all major powers show a converging pattern in their doctrines and behaviour. This result surprised me. It is clear that there are major interests at sea for which a sense of responsibility exists. The end of the Cold War and the globalisation of the economy have led to a shift in the competition between nations. The battle for territory has become a battle for control of markets. The global economy is evolving more and more into a worldwide network of flows of goods, capital, information and people which are creating permanent links between regions, social groups and economies.

The growth of the global economy, which stalled abruptly at the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009, gathered speed again in 2010 and then suffered another serious setback in 2011 as a result of the euro crisis. The maritime strategies of the superpowers were drawn up at the time of the latter phase of the economic boom. The trend-spotting stopped just before the effects of the euro crisis started to make themselves felt. Does that mean that the trends that were identified and the maritime strategies that were formulated no longer hold true? That is not likely. China, India and Brazil are expected to implement their proposed (maritime) plans as originally intended and to win political, economic and military ground from the US and Europe in the coming years. For Russia, that is more difficult to predict, as the influence of that country depends on its natural resources. All indications are, however, that with the current and future leadership, the (maritime) military position will be strengthened in accordance with the original plans. The great rebalancing of the world will thus keep its momentum and the credit crisis will merely act as a catalyst in this process. It is important to monitor developments closely and to see what the effects will be.

In my position as Head of the Maritime Warfare Centre in Den Helder (2008-2011), I spent much of my time on research for this publication, but research is not a solitary business. Special thanks go to Lt Col (RNL Marines) Marc Houben and Captain (RNLN) Michiel Wouters for their contributions. For the proofreading of the various versions and for providing critical comments, I would also like to thank Commander (RNLN) Jeroen de Jonge and Commander (RNLN) Derk Kuijper.

Captain (RNLN) E.H. Veen (*drs.*)

# 1 The maritime might of superpowers

*The superpowers often behave like two heavily armed blind men feeling their way around a room, each believing himself in mortal peril from the other, whom he assumes to have perfect vision.*

Henry A. Kissinger (b. 1923)

## 1.1 On 'ordinary' countries and superpowers

There are 'ordinary' countries and there are superpowers. The ordinary states that are designated as Superpowers are those which are able, through great economic, political and military power, to put pressure on the international political situation. They have the capability to conduct military intervention virtually anywhere and they also have 'soft' power, usually in the form of economic investments in less developed parts of the world. Superpowers can effectively defend their interests by projecting power. Ordinary countries need to collaborate or seek the help or protection of a superpower. A superpower can, in theory, cope on its own.

Superpowers do not, however, live for ever; they come and go, as argued by Paul Kennedy in his book 'The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers' (1987). Today, too, we have existing and emerging superpowers. The USA is the acknowledged superpower, the EU has ambitions to become a world player, Russian wants to regain its credibility as a superpower and Brazil, China and India are currently progressing inexorably towards superpower status.

The starting point for this paper is based on the perception that emerging and existing superpowers are making their presence felt in no uncertain terms in the maritime dimension. They establish a maritime strategy and communicate it to the outside world, they build an impressive fleet of naval ships and become actively involved in (maritime) conflicts. This paper looks for an answer to the



question: how and why are these superpowers making their presence felt in the maritime domain? This will be done on the basis of a comparative analysis of the maritime strategies of existing and emerging superpowers.

This publication consists of four chapters. The first introductory chapter will set out the background and the analytical framework. The second and third chapters will present six case studies in respect of six superpowers which appear in the maritime domain in a completely unique and individual way. The studies look at four emerging superpowers – Brazil, Russia, India and China – and two existing superpowers – the US and the European Union. The fourth chapter will present the comparative analysis and conclusions.

## 1.2 Power, cooperation and legislation

Power, cooperation and legislation are presented here as a complementary trinity. Superpowers can manage partly on their own, can control international processes or can bring their influence to bear; but often, they also have to collaborate and abide by international legislation.

### Power

The primary characteristic of a superpower is the ability to project 'power'. A superpower is, in theory, not bound by what others think or do. By virtue of its size and political-military weight, a superpower can project its power more independently. In today's 'networked' international environment, an attitude like this is untenable in the long term, even for a superpower. For economic development, even a superpower depends to a greater or lesser extent on trade (import and/or export) with other economic blocs. Most of that trade is conducted globally by sea. The international community has a vested interest in ensuring that these trade movements can flow freely. To be able to flourish in economic terms, superpowers need to demonstrate a constructive involvement with the rest of the world.

This is also true for many of the common problems faced by humanity, such as climate change and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These problems can only be resolved with a united, joint approach. The world is slowly waking up to the fact that the problems caused by interstate conflicts, irregular forces, criminality and international terrorism cannot be resolved by individual states. In the current climate, only with a broad international coalition can there be any question of success.

The increasing mutual dependence is also affecting superpowers. Direct confrontation is not desirable for the superpowers, but that does not rule out power politics. Power will play a particular role in the global acquisition of influence by superpowers in regions that are home to the vital and sought-after raw materials. Power also plays a part in relations with Third World countries and failing states. In many cases, deployment of military means is only effective as part of an integrated approach in which security and development go hand in hand. This comprehensive approach, as it is known, features in the spectrum between diplomacy and the deployment of military means<sup>2</sup>.

### Cooperation

The growing mutual economic and financial dependence is forcing countries, superpowers included, to seek a constructive political relationship. The use of military means is effective when primary national interests are damaged. That would, for example, be the case for China if Taiwan declares its independence.

Nevertheless, the principles and the interests of superpowers are not all the same. There is a danger that the old powers, which fare well in the current international order, will want to keep things as they are, but that the emerging Asian powers and third-world countries, which usually have less influence in the current order, will seek change<sup>3</sup>.

In any case, the ongoing proliferation of weapon systems and technology enables state and non-state actors to pose a threat, direct or indirect, to global maritime interests and activities.

### Legislation

The main international treaty for upholding order at sea is the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III, 1982). The convention divides up the maritime domain, but leaves the application of the rules for this division and the stipulation of the extent to which a coastal state can exercise jurisdiction over the allocated sea zone open to a considerable amount of interpretation. It is partly due to this that the convention has not yet been signed by all countries and has not yet been ratified by all the countries that have signed, such as the US.

<sup>2</sup> NATO Bucharest Summit Declaration by Heads of State, 3 April 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Joint Statement of the BRIC Countries Leaders; Yekaterinburg, 16 June 2009.

There are three stumbling blocks obstructing the progress of dividing up the sea. The first problem relates to the formulation of unambiguous rules/criteria for the partitioning of the maritime domain on the basis of topographic or geographic terrain features. This has proved virtually impossible because of the complexity of the ocean floor and the domain. The UN has also been unable to establish a legal zoning of sea territory and, lastly, unlike land, the sea cannot be seized. A sea zone can only be controlled for a limited time and over a limited area, although this may well change in the future in relation to the ocean floor. The current deadlock in relation to international law shows, however, that bringing international waters under national jurisdiction – *mare clausum* – is not a solution. The situation is predictable and inevitable – if international law cannot provide a solution for the regulation of sovereignty, the problem will be solved by the most powerful. Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, therefore, power politics and naval power still constitute the deciding factor when splitting up the control of the maritime domain.

### 1.3 Analytical framework

Countries maintain a presence in the maritime domain for the following reasons:

- 1 **Protection of the sea lines of communication (SLOCs).** Nowadays, this involves the deployment of maritime assets for upholding international law and offering protection against non-military but criminal and asymmetric threats. Examples of units that are suited to these tasks are patrol ships and frigates.
- 2 **Ensuring maritime security.** The aim here is to enforce and where necessary restore the rule of law at sea. To do so requires a complete and continuous awareness of ship and air movements and activities of other maritime objects. Suitable and well-positioned interception assets can be deployed effectively on the basis of that detailed picture. The possibility of deploying maritime units to deny an opponent the use of part or all of a sea zone is also an element of maritime security. A sea zone is three-dimensional in this respect: underwater, the surface and the airspace above it. The required capabilities are related to the size of the area, but this will quickly generate a requirement for a larger, more complex maritime task force (frigates, submarines, aircraft carriers, minehunters, etc).

- 3 **Conflict prevention and maritime presence.** In the past, deterrence was used in a more reactive sense to prevent an opponent from displaying ‘undesirable behaviour’ (gunboat diplomacy). Nowadays, the deployment of an active military maritime presence is more geared towards using joint exercises and training in combination with diplomacy to establish trust among the ‘other parties’ and thus prevent conflicts. Units that can play a role here are, for example, frigates, amphibious forces and larger maritime task forces (aircraft carriers and/or amphibious formation).
- 4 **Humanitarian operations and emergency relief.** The purpose of emergency (or humanitarian) relief is to rescue and provide direct aid to victims of (natural) disasters or armed conflicts. The secondary aim may be the provisional restoration of the victims’ living environment. Amphibious forces are ideally suited to this task.

### Paul Kennedy: The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers

In 1987, Paul Kennedy showed in his book, ‘The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers’, that the economic and military strength of world powers are closely linked to each other and that military power often diminishes over the course of time. Over the course of history, there always seem to be shifts in economic growth. Because of that, a country may become much richer than others during a particular period and thus bring its weight to bear as a world power. After a while, however, there are always other countries which will catch up. Much higher costs will then be involved in maintaining overall ascendancy, which will itself once again put pressure on the economic development of the world power. This will eventually give rise to a situation in which the political and military requirements exceed the economic resources of a world power (imperial overstretch). Even for the United States as a superpower, Kennedy foresaw an inevitable decline. The slowing down of industrial production, the trade deficits and the decline in economic growth would make it difficult to keep defence expenditure affordable and top-level. The political and military room to manoeuvre would thus be reduced. Kennedy saw it as *the* big challenge for American leaders to deal wisely and calmly with the eventual and inevitable erosion of the country’s position of power.

### Kishore Mahbubani: Power shift from West to East

Kishore Mahbubani goes a step further. In his book ‘The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East’ (2008), he tells his readers that relations will once again be as they generally used to be over the last two

thousand years, namely that the economies of Asia were much greater than those of the West. In his book, he describes how the West has brought much good to the world, such as education, justice, equality, meritocracy and technological progress. He also concludes, however, that the West does not understand that global change cannot take place exclusively according to Western criteria and that problems could arise in the process. According to Mahbubani, the greatest challenge for the future world order is the way in which the US deals with this geopolitical power shift. He states that this shift in power cannot be ignored for various reasons.

Mahbubani's ideas cannot be seen in isolation. The old model of international relations is based on a world that is organised exclusively around sovereign states. That model cannot cope with today's global problems. Climate change, stable energy supplies, safe food, counter-terrorism, poverty and disease can only be dealt with properly if they are coordinated at global level. But if one looks at how international organisations such as the UN, the World Bank and the IMF are directed, it is evident that these are based on out-dated international relations. These institutions were set up with the global political establishment of 1945 in mind. Developing countries are questioning the balance of administrative power in these organisations and are therefore refusing to accept some decisions. The composition of the UN Security Council has been under discussion for years. In the Security Council, the UK and France are permanent members with right of veto, and India, with over a billion people, is not a permanent member. With the emergence of Asia, it is becoming increasingly clear that the legitimacy and effectiveness of international action need to be improved. The role of the emerging Asian countries will have to come more into its own, particularly in the administration of international institutions in order to address their increasing lack of legitimacy.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> UN News Centre, 17 June 2011: 'Asked about Security Council reform, the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said: 'if you consider the dramatic and significant changes which have taken place during the last 65 years, the Security Council needs to be, should be, changed. Adapting to changing situations, that means that the Security Council should be reformed in a more representative, a more credible and democratic way.'"

#### Four questions

Existing and emerging superpowers are much in evidence in the maritime domain. To place the analysis in context, it will be conducted along the lines of the following four questions.

- 1 Has the superpower ratified UNCLOS?
- 2 Does the superpower have an explicit maritime strategy and what intentions are expressed in it?
- 3 What does the composition of the fleet look like and what is the construction and acquisition programme? What capabilities is the superpower developing and what is the intended use?
- 4 How does the superpower behave at sea? How does it display its (budding) maritime power?

These four questions will be answered for each of the six identified superpowers. Given that the scope of this paper is already extremely broad, the financial-economic analysis of the various countries will only be presented in brief. An attempt will be made, however, to evaluate the financial-economic and socio-demographic changes in a country's position in terms of maritime merits.

## 2 Emerging superpowers

*A war can perhaps be won single-handedly. But peace – lasting peace – cannot be secured without the support of all.*

Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (1945 – )

### 2.1 Brazil: superpower or regional power?

With its 8.5 million square kilometres, Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world. Only Russia, Canada, the United States and China are larger. With a current population of 191 million and an annual population growth of 1.3%, Brazil is not only the fifth country in the world in terms of size, but it also has what is certainly one of the fastest growing populations. In 1950, there were ‘only’ 50 million, in 2000 the 170 million mark was passed and it is estimated that by 2050 there will be more than 250 million people in Brazil. A principal factor here is the fairly high life expectancy of 67.3 years for men and 75.1 for women. More than half the population is under 20 and one third is under 25<sup>5</sup>.

Brazil has climbed to the position of fifth largest economy (GDP) in the world, with developed agricultural, mining, industrial and service sectors. The country has paid off all its outstanding loans to the IMF and the World Bank. For the longer term, Brazil has a number of important trump cards. As well as the demographic trump, the huge oil finds off the coast are important for economic development. The state oil company Petrobras recently discovered offshore oil fields with a capacity of five to eight billion barrels. Experts estimate that the Brazilian continental shelf holds substantial oil reserves to the tune of some 33 billion barrels. These oil reserves could make Brazil one of the biggest oil producers in the world; they are cherished and seen as the national treasure and the nation’s ticket to development and prosperity.

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5 CIA The World Factbook



BRAZILIAN OIL PLATFORM (SOURCE: DIVULGAÇÃO PETROBRAS/AGÊNCIA BRASIL)

Because the influence of the United States in Latin America has diminished sharply in recent years, Brazil has an even greater chance of emerging as the major regional leader for whom South America is the natural area of influence. Brazil is a member of the G20. It is the largest food producer, has for years been a front runner and world leader in the field of biofuels and will also soon be a true oil state. All the conditions for a role as a great power would seem to be present.

Former president Lula also had increasing success in stimulating regional cooperation in South America. The new bodies established partly on his initiative are beginning to work, such as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) as an alternative to the Organisation of American States, and the BancoSur as a sort of regional World Bank. His successor, Dilma Rouseff, has continued all aspects of the policy. The Brazilian president is also a self-appointed leader of what are referred to as the G77 nations, the group of developing countries, meeting regularly with other emerging economies such as China, India and South Africa, with which a sort of southern East-West link has been created<sup>6</sup>. Thanks to all these developments, Brazil has gained so much self-confidence that first Lula and now Rouseff feel able to call publicly for a permanent place in the Security Council and the serious reorganisation of the UN that would accompany such a move<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> On the second summit of the India - Brazil - South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum, Brazil called for a reform of the UN Security Council.

<sup>7</sup> Statement by H.E. Ms. Dilma Rouseff, President of Brazil, during the 66th General Assembly of the UN (21 September 2011)

The Brazilian government proclaims that the country can be described as a peaceful, tolerant and multi-ethnic nation. Brazil is surrounded by ten neighbouring countries – the largest number in the world after Russia – and coexists peacefully with all of them<sup>8</sup>. Disputes are settled by treaties or international arbitration. Brazil's last war was in 1860 following an attack from Paraguay. After Nigeria, Brazil has the highest number of Negroid inhabitants in the world, constituting 40% of the population. The country has virtually no ethnic tensions. There are, however, internal tensions between rich and poor, something which was tackled with some success by President Lula. Brazil has no terrorism, no separatism, but it does function as a transit country for drugs, mainly via the Amazon region.

Brazil's foreign and security policy is officially developing along the lines of four principles:

- Universalism. Brazil maintains relations with almost all countries in the world, the priority being in South America.
- Non-intervention. Brazil advocates a policy of non-intervention; in other words, it will not intervene in the (internal) politics of other states. This does not mean that the country is indifferent; it will supply aid, for example.
- Multilateralism. Brazil is a strong advocate of multilateralism, for example through the UN or the WTO. This is in Brazil's own interest. It provides a safeguard in respect of strong nations, as disputes can be brought before a multilateral organisation.
- Non-proliferation. Brazil does not see itself as a military power. It spends less on defence than its neighbours and supports (nuclear) disarmament and non-proliferation.

This last point needs some qualification. The defence strategy states that Brazil will disregard the restrictions imposed by the non-proliferation treaty until countries that possess nuclear weapons give a clear indication that they will proceed with nuclear disarmament.

<sup>8</sup> Report for Netherlands Ministry of Defense Advanced Defence Studies (Leergang Tertiaire Vorming LTV), quoting the Brazilian ambassador to The Netherlands.





Dutch Minister of Defence Hans Hillen speaks with his Brazilian counterpart Celso Amorim

### Brazilian Defence/Naval strategy

After democracy was restored in Brazil after more than 20 years of military dictatorship (1964-1985), the country neglected its defence for a long time. That time has passed and Brazil now aims to build a modern military apparatus that is in keeping with its geopolitical ambitions and which can also provide protection for the natural resources in the Amazon basin and the Atlantic Ocean. For Brazil, the development of its defence is linked to the development experienced by the country itself. The emphasis lies on defending Brazil against aggressors and also against other threats.

On 18 December 2008, 'The National Strategy of Defense' (NSD) was published. This document shows that the ambitions stretch beyond the South American continent. Brazil's ambition is to become a world nation and is striving for independence from other countries. The development of Brazil and the guarantee of national security are inextricably linked to each other. Economic, political and military autonomy are key to the country's development.

The ambitions declared in the NSD have implications for the structure of the Brazilian armed forces. The people of Brazil expect their armed forces to be able to respond to any conceivable threat and to defend the envisaged economic and political autonomy against all threats. As well as the traditional objectives, another stated ambition is to improve the ability to control the airspace, the land and the territorial waters. The armed forces are also being made responsible for reinforcing three strategically important sectors: cyber technology (army), space (air force) and nuclear development (navy). In order to implement its ambitions, Brazil wants to start producing launch installations for satellites. The plan is that these installations would be used to launch geostationary satellites for telecommunications and other purposes into space. In the field of cybernetics, the main objective is to develop network-enabled capabilities in order to expand the C4I between the services and thus contribute to the envisaged joint character of the armed forces. Up until 2004, the defence budget continued to shrink to 1.4% of Brazil's GDP. From 2005, however, it has seen an annual increase of 10%, bringing it to 1.7% of GDP in 2009, namely 29.7 billion USD.<sup>9</sup>

The NSD also sets out guidelines for the organisation and composition of the armed forces and also for the reorganisation of the defence industry. For the first aspect, conscription is particularly important. This guarantees the required anchoring of the army in society (those who cannot do military service have to do substitute civil services, where there is enough capacity, within the Comprehensive Civilian Service, as stated in the NSD). Better cooperation between the services needs to be stimulated by merging the staffs within the Ministry of Defence to form a joint staff.

The tasks of the armed forces, as expressed in the National Strategy of Defense, can be summarised as follows:

- To maintain a defensively-oriented defence organisation, focusing on deterrence;
- To monitor the whole of Brazilian airspace, land and territorial waters with the country's own military means. This applies in particular to the Amazon region because of the criminal and drug-related activities there;
- Quick-reaction capability in the event of a military threat, based on high strategic mobility;

<sup>9</sup> Military Balance 2010

- Search-and-rescue tasks;
- Showing the flag in all border regions as a sign of vigilance;
- To contribute to peace operations, in principle under the UN flag;
- National tasks at the request of the government.

Brazil does not have a specific maritime strategy, but the NSD does contain maritime elements that direct the Brazilian navy. The Brazilian navy is the largest navy in Latin America and, besides the traditional naval tasks, is also responsible for coastguard tasks, including operations on the main rivers and estuaries. This also involves the defence of the 7491-kilometre coastline. In its strategy, however, the emphasis is on blue-water operations, in which the main task is to protect Brazilian interests and territory against foreign powers. The blue-water objectives such as sea denial, sea control and power projection have become all the more important after the discovery of oil off the coast of Brazil. This applies especially to the southern Atlantic Ocean, where the recently discovered oil reserves are located and where the majority of with Brazil's international trade is conducted.

In view of the above, the mission of the Brazilian navy is as follows:

- To defend the country's territorial integrity by securing maritime sovereignty and monitoring the more than 7000 kilometres of coastline.
- To promote economic security by inspecting fishing vessels and combating (drug-)smuggling.
- Raising Brazil's international profile through presence and naval power projection in the southern part of the Atlantic Ocean.

The NSD indicates where the focus should be for the navy:

- 1 Proactive defence of the oil platforms.
- 2 Proactive defence of naval and port facilities, archipelagos and islands located in Brazil's area of jurisdiction.
- 3 Rapid response to any threat to the sea lanes by states or unconventional/criminal elements.
- 4 Ability to participate in international peace operations outside Brazilian territory under the flag of the UN or other multinational organisations in the region.



THE BRAZILIAN FRIGATE BNS LIBERAL DURING A JOINT EXERCISE WITH THE US AIRCRAFT CARRIER USS HARRY S. TRUMAN IN 2009 (US NAVY PHOTO)

### Development of the Brazilian navy

The Brazilian navy numbers approximately 67,000 military personnel (including 15,000 marines and 1,387 naval air service personnel), of which the vast majority are career service personnel. As part of the further expansion, this is expected to increase to 73,000 military personnel in the lead-up to 2030. The navy comprises some 100 ships and an equal number of planes and helicopters. The materiel is often outdated and includes, for example, the former French aircraft carrier *Foch*, which served in the French navy from 1963 to 2000 and is, therefore, now nearly 50 years old. The heart of the current navy consists of a number of frigates bought from the British Royal Navy (*Broadsword* class), which are all now about 25 years old, and five submarines of German origin which date back to the sixties. More up to date are the 12 offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) from the mid-nineties.

To ensure that the size, equipment and organisation of the fleet correspond to the ambitions, the Brazilian navy has drawn up an ambitious programme, called the *Plano de Articulação e Equipamento da Marinha do Brasil*. Various new-build plans are being drawn up within this programme and are being allocated a budget of around 250 billion USD up to 2030. The programme will be implemented in three stages: short term 2010-2014, medium term 2015-2022 and long term 2023-2030.



In view of the navy's focus, underwater operations are an important element. For the shorter term, priority is being given to the construction of four conventional submarines, three different classes of patrol vessels (200, 500 and 1,800 ton), a new tanker/supply ship, three frigates (6,000 ton each) and a multipurpose helicopter carrier of around 20,000 ton. Of these, the four submarines and three 1,800-ton patrol vessels have already been put out to tender.

In the longer term (10 to 15 years), the building programme only provides further plans for the construction of two multipurpose vessels of around 40,000 ton, which can also be used as aircraft carriers, and a mix of four LHDs of around 20,000 ton, 30 escorts (frigates), 15 conventional submarines, 5 nuclear submarines and 62 patrol vessels.

The four conventional submarines that have been put out to tender are based on the French *Scorpene* design. It has been agreed with the French shipyard that the contract will also include the transfer of knowledge relating to the construction of a maintenance dock for submarines where the ships are built/assembled, as well as the development of a nuclear-powered submarine. In the NSD, the strategically important sector of 'nuclear energy' is specifically assigned to the navy. The Brazilian perception is that nuclear submarines represent an iconic maritime capability that is exclusively reserved for very large countries. The ability to build and possess nuclear submarines is in this perception one of the hallmarks of a superpower and world superstatus.

In 2008, Admiral Julio Saboya expressed it as follows: *'A nuclear submarine could pave the way for Brazil to obtain a permanent seat at the Security Council. Those who have nuclear submarines are members of the United Nations Security Council. All permanent members have the technology, which none of them give up. We have to develop our own'*.

In general, it is fair to say that the Brazilian navy – the *Forças da Marinha* – still has limited operational capabilities. For the time being, the planned maritime construction programme also remains limited in the short term. Over time, the maritime capabilities will, on the basis of the plans, be expanded significantly, mainly to provide coastal security and protect offshore interests. Brazil believes that it needs to fill the power vacuum in the southern Atlantic Ocean, as it will otherwise be given away to other world players.

### Ratification of UNCLOS

On 25 October 2007, Brazil ratified the last paragraphs of the UNCLOS treaty. Brazil is not claiming any zones or areas that differ from what has been agreed in UNCLOS.<sup>10</sup>

### Military operations

Unlike Argentina and Chile, Brazil has no territorial disputes with its neighbours. Brazilian forces have, therefore, hardly ever been deployed outside national borders. Since 1994, when Brazil first supplied military forces for UN peacekeeping operations, Brazilian forces have operated in five countries. For the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), Brazil put itself forward as the lead nation in 2004. The mandate, which originally ran until 1 December 2004, has been extended every year since then. After Haiti was hit by an earthquake on 12 January 2010, in which UN personnel were also killed, the mission has focused primarily on the relief task. With resolution 1927 (4 June 2010), the number of members was increased and the mission was once again extended. A new resolution on 14 October 2011 extended the mandate yet again until June 2012. There is now some debate in Brazil about the need for and purpose of participation in this mission. Nonetheless, the (military) leadership is for the time being still in Brazilian hands. Indeed Brazil's ambition to present itself as a superpower is reason enough to continue to participate in this mission. In that sense, Brazil is using MINUSTAH not only out of ideological considerations to support worldwide peace, but also out of political pragmatism.

In the absence of any threat (foreign or domestic), the Brazilian navy is seeking new tasks (roles) in order to justify the increased budget. As well as a growing presence in the Amazon basin, the Brazilian navy is also, in accordance with its mission, making its presence particularly felt in the southern Atlantic Ocean.

On February 24, 2011, admiral Luiz Henrique Caroli took over command of the Maritime Task Group of UNIFIL on board the Brazilian frigate *União*, off the coast of Lebanon. This is the first time that Brazil participates in an international maritime military operation. According to the admiral, Brazil sends with this commitment a strong political signal with regard to international relationships. Brazil shows that the country is concerned about maintaining peace in Lebanon and to promoting stability in the region.

<sup>10</sup> [www.un.org/Depts/los/reference\\_files/chronological\\_lists\\_of\\_ratifications.htm#The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/reference_files/chronological_lists_of_ratifications.htm#The%20United%20Nations%20Convention%20on%20the%20Law%20of%20the%20Sea)



BRAZILIAN BOARDING TEAM ON EXERCISE (US NAVY PHOTO)

### Analysis

The facts that Brazil depends on foreign aid for vital technologies, occupies a modest 53<sup>th</sup> place in the global competitiveness index<sup>11</sup> (for comparison, the Netherlands is in 7<sup>th</sup> place) and has an ambitious plan for the fleet are still not enough to be able to call Brazil a superpower at this point in time. Its fleet is still for the moment smaller than the British Royal Navy, for example. Brazil does, however, have the potential to develop into an agricultural superpower and a regional power. Brazil certainly does have the ambition to become a superpower. Proofs of this are the recent actions taken by Brazil, in particular the participation in a multinational maritime operation (UNIFIL).

The ratification of UNCLOS and the formulated national defence objectives in the national defence strategy show that Brazil has the political will to contribute to international peace and security, mainly to ensure that it gains a key role in international decision-making processes.

Brazil's presence in the maritime domain is driven primarily by desire to protect its offshore oil interests. The second motive is the desire to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Brazil is using its maritime military build-up to defend its national interests and to take an active role in the region. Despite all its ambitions, Brazil is still a small (regional) player in international military terms.

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## 2.2 China, a burgeoning maritime power

China is the fourth largest country in the world in size, after Russia, Canada and the United States, but with 1.3 billion inhabitants, it has the largest population in the world. The policy on birth control (one-child policy) has a highly moderating effect on population growth. The continuation of this policy will mean that India will eventually top China in terms of population. After the centrally-led, state-controlled economy, the introduction of the market mechanism threw the development of the Chinese economy into the fast stream. This dramatic growth meant that China ousted Japan from second place in terms of the size of the economy. Although leading economists are constantly warning that the Chinese economy will 'overheat', expectations are that the Chinese leaders will be able to keep this under control and that China will eventually overtake the US as an economic power. As well as problems like corruption, environmental damage, water shortages (in higher lying areas) and the loss of agricultural land, the greatest economic problems for the future are the depopulation of rural areas and the ageing of the population as a result of the one-child policy.

For the Communist Party, economic growth is no longer a choice but a bitter necessity to keep the Chinese people, growing numbers of whom are heading to the cities, satisfied and in work. There is constant fear of social unrest. For the leaders of the Communist Party, stability is paramount. The Chinese leadership no longer believes in communist ideology to legitimise its political position. The survival of the Chinese Communist Party depends on the extent to which tangible economic returns are achieved for the people. It is only results which

11 World Economic Forum: The Global Competitiveness Report 2011 - 2012, Geneva, 2011.

will give the communist party the power of legitimacy. As early as 1962, Deng Xiaoping put it like this: *'No matter if it is a white cat or a black cat; as long as it can catch mice, it is a good cat.'* For the first time in many years, foreign demand has decreased as a result of the global economic crisis. The government has announced measures to increase domestic demand in order to reduce dependence on exports for economic growth.

China's own raw materials are limited. Even now, the country relies on imports for more than 53% of its oil consumption. This makes the energy position a key issue for China's strategic development. The current industrial development depends largely on energy from coal-fired power stations. In the short term, there are plans to use more gas as fuel. In order to guarantee economic growth in the long term, internal measures are being taken that should result in a more efficient use of energy (and a 40% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) and investments are being made in nuclear and alternative energy. By 2020, China should have more than 40 1000-megawatt nuclear power stations. In many countries, China is trying to acquire concessions in order to secure energy sources and raw materials in the future. In Africa in particular, areas rich in raw materials are being bought up and developed.

The essence of Chinese foreign policy can be analysed on the basis of something the great transformational leader, Deng Xiaoping, said at the beginning of 1990: *'Observe calmly, secure our position, cope with affairs calmly, hide our capacity and bide our time; be good at maintaining a low profile and never claim leadership'*. This statement emphasised Deng Xiaoping's conviction that China's foreign policy should serve the national interests by developing the interior and by avoiding risks, international obligations and provocation. With the expansion of Chinese interests and influence, the diplomatic and military presence have become more evident. At the 17<sup>th</sup> party congress in October 2007, the current president, Hu Jintao, presented his ideology of a 'Harmonious World', placing the emphasis on diversity and equality. Bearing witness to development, this vision still finds its roots in Deng's ideas. In concrete terms, China's foreign policy centres on five principles: mutual respect, non-aggression, non-intervention, equal/mutual advantage and peaceful coexistence. The five principles ensure that China takes a remarkably pragmatic view of the internal goings-on in the country with which it does business (for example, Sudan and Iran).



COMMANDER OF THE ROYAL NETHERLANDS NAVY, VICE ADMIRAL BORSBOOM, ON A VISIT TO CHINA (2011)

The growing self-confidence resulting from economic growth in combination with progress in the field of science and technology has spurred China on towards military modernisation. Changes to the size of the defence budget have moved at an even faster pace than the development of economic growth. The defence budget grew officially from 27 billion USD in 2000 to over 78 billion USD in 2010. But military expenses were probably much higher in reality. In his annual report to the US Congress, the US Secretary of Defense stated that the actual budget could be as high as 150 billion USD, given that major military expenses were not included in the official budget.

As an emerging world power, China wants to underline and safeguard its status with all the associated instruments of power. But Deng Xiaoping also said: *'nothing is more important than stability'*. China normally adopts a low profile, tries to avoid blatant arms procurement and neutralises border disputes with neighbouring countries by means of diplomacy. At this point in time, the relationship with the other great power in the region, India, is of particular

interest. In economic and political terms, the relationship is good on paper, but a latent competitiveness as emerging superpowers and tensions in the border region near Tibet continue to have an effect.

### Chinese Defence/Naval strategy

In contrast to most western countries, China does not publish a national security or defence strategy. China uses white papers, speeches and articles in important journals to make its policy and strategy public. The most recent white paper was published at the end of 2010<sup>12</sup>. To guarantee continuity, the Chinese leadership seems to use a number of strategic priorities. These include:

- Protect the national sovereignty
- Maintain social harmony and stability (domestic stability)
- Sustainable economic growth and development
- Accelerate the modernisation of the national defence and the armed forces
- Maintain world peace and stability

It is not clear how the Chinese government forms a strategic plan from these at times contradictory priorities. There is, however, a directive, the National Military Strategic Guidelines for the New Period, which indicates how the different basic priorities need to be balanced. This directive is not publicly available. The last white paper highlighted the realisation that China has arrived at an important historical juncture and that, as a great power, it should play a major role in respect of international security. This realisation was expressed in an earlier white paper (2008) as follows: *'China has become an important member of the international system and the future and destiny of China have been increasingly closely connected with the international community. China cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the World, nor can the world enjoy prosperity and stability without China'*<sup>13</sup>. The traditional inward focus in strategic thinking has thus been transformed into a desire to contribute internationally too and thereby help to safeguard China's interests.<sup>14</sup>

The development of the Chinese armed forces and missions follows a steadily rising line, in keeping with the economic development and the associated

security challenges. These missions, primarily geared towards the adjusted views on international security held by the modern-day Chinese leadership, are:

- 1 to guarantee the leadership of the communist party;
- 2 to guarantee sufficient security to safeguard the strategic opportunity for national development;
- 3 to provide strategic support for the protection of national interests;
- 4 to play a major role in upholding world peace and in stimulating common development.

The huge earthquake that hit the Sichuan province in 2008 broadened the thinking on missions. It turned out that the armed forces were not able to provide adequate support in natural disasters such as this. In a speech to military representatives in March 2009, President Hu Jintao stressed that the armed forces should not only be concentrating on the development of military capabilities, but that they should also be able to conduct military operations in circumstances other than war. Analysts believe that the phrase 'operations other than war' refers not only to humanitarian aid but also to combating terrorism, maintaining social stability, search and rescue and international peace operations.

Until 1990, the Chinese navy, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), played a subordinate role within the army. The PLAN confined itself to protecting the maritime borders. But the shift in the economic centre of gravity to the coastal region, the reduced threat of an invasion in the hinterland and the awareness of the increasing dependence on the functioning of the trade routes (SLOCs) for economic development meant that the PLAN was to undergo the necessary transformation. The 2008 White Paper describes the Chinese navy as a strategic armed force which should have and develop the capabilities for distant sea defence. The PLAN has three main missions:

- 1 to defend against aggression from the sea;
- 2 to protect national sovereignty;
- 3 to safeguard maritime rights.

The PLAN's doctrine for maritime operations is divided into six offensive and defensive scenarios.

- 1 Blockade operations
- 2 SLOC operations (both in an offensive sense (the disruption of other countries' supply routes) and in a defensive sense (the protection of own supply lines))
- 3 Maritime land offensive

<sup>12</sup> [www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node\\_7114675.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7114675.htm)

<sup>13</sup> China's National Defense in 2008, Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, January 2009, Beijing.

<sup>14</sup> Annual Reports to US Congress 2009 and 2010



- 4 Anti-ship (surface actions)
- 5 Protection of maritime transport
- 6 Port defences

For China, the SLOCs are vitally important for assuring economic growth. Experts from the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations predict that China will experience an energy crisis if oil supplies are disrupted. Whoever has control of the shipping routes also has control of the Chinese economy. China has, therefore, tightened the links with countries along its main maritime trade routes (the String of Pearls). Peking is helping Pakistan to build a port at Gwadar, improving a military airbase in the South China Sea, managing stations in Myanmar and negotiating fleet facilities in Bangladesh.<sup>15</sup>

### Development of the Chinese navy

An ambitious development and construction programme was needed to put the PLAN's new role into practice. In 1987, Chinese Admiral Liu Huaqing, founder of the modern Chinese navy, developed a strategic fleet plan for this, based on the principle of 'quality over quantity'. This represented a break with the past, where by contrast large numbers with little capacity were the goal. The plan has to be carried out in three phases, which are as follows:

- 1 Until 2010, the priority lies on gaining sea control (guard and protect) in China's coastal waters.
- 2 Over the period 2010 – 2020, the Chinese navy needs to acquire a capability for sea denial reaching as far as the so-called 'First Island Chain', mainly to prevent Taiwan from declaring independence from China and to prevent US intervention in China's internal affairs.
- 3 By 2050 a powerful navy needs to have been developed with worldwide deployment capacity.

In organisational terms, the existing navy consists of three fleets. The headquarters of the Northern fleet is based in Qingdao; the Eastern fleet is located in Ningbo and the Southern fleet in Zhanjing. Each fleet comprises surface units, submarines, naval air service, coastal defence and marines. The Chinese navy has 250,000 personnel, including 56,000 marines and 35,000 coastal defence personnel. Part of the modernisation is also to streamline and integrate the command structure.



THE CHINESE NAVY IS DIVIDED INTO FLEETS (SOURCE: US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE)

In building up its navy, China is now choosing quality over quantity. Going by current policy, it has the largest fleet in Asia. The focus has also shifted from low capability, single mission to high capability, multi-mission. It is estimated that the existing surface fleet consists of 75 large surface units, 45 coastal patrol vessels equipped with missiles and 50 amphibious transport ships of varying size. Submarine components also have high priority in order to establish the nuclear deterrent and sea denial. At this time, the procurement of five types of submarine (nuclear and conventional) is being prepared, including the Jin-class SSBN, the Shang-class SSN, the improved Song- and Yuan-class SSK and the Russian Kilo-class SSK.

The procurement of one or more aircraft carriers is seen by the Chinese military leaders as an affirmation of superpower status. In the light of that view, China purchased the hull of the unfinished former Soviet-Russian aircraft carrier *Varyag* in Ukraine in 1998. Not until recently, in June 2011, was it officially acknowledged that the ship would be rebuilt and commissioned into the navy. Because negotiations concerning the associated Russian Su-33 aircraft were never

<sup>15</sup> Bedford, C. The view from the west. String of Pearls: China's maritime strategy in India's backyard. Canadian Naval Review, Volume 4, Number 4 (Winter 2009)



MOCK-UP (SCALE 1:1) OF THE CHINESE AIRCRAFT CARRIER IN CHINA'S INTERIOR (SOURCE: WWW.JEFFHEAD.COM)

successful, China is rumoured to be building its own type of carrier-based aircraft, based on a prototype of the Su-33 obtained from Ukraine. In the meantime, a decision had already been made to train 50 navy pilots for carrier-based air operations.

As well as the construction of a new naval port on the island of Hainan, work is also being done to improve the over-the-horizon target designation capabilities with long-range radars (sky wave and surface wave) in combination with satellites. The modernisation is not expected to have much effect on the total number of units: 27 destroyers, 48 frigates and 60 submarines.

### The Chinese divide between word and deed on UNCLOS

On 25 February 1992, China's supreme legislative body, the Permanent Committee of the National People's Congress, adopted the 'Law on territorial waters and their contiguous areas', which expresses a specific claim on Taiwan and various island groups in the South China Sea, such as the Spratly Archipelago, the

Paracel islands and the Penghu islands. China is in effect claiming 80% of the South China Sea as territorial waters or as an exclusive economic zone (EEZ). A map with a dotted line – known as the *nine-dash line* – is circulating within China as justification for this claim.<sup>16</sup> China's claim is being fiercely disputed by neighbouring countries such as the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia and Taiwan. The overlapping claims have already led to various maritime conflicts. China nonetheless ratified UNCLOS in 1996.<sup>17</sup>

The status quo is that five southeast Asian countries – the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Brunei and Malaysia – have agreed, in respect of claims on various island groups and overlapping EEZs, that they will resolve their disputes through the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS). On the other side of the fence is China, which rejects the UNCLOS regulations in this case and is trying to institutionalise its claim through international law by persuading the surrounding countries to acquiesce to China's agreements.

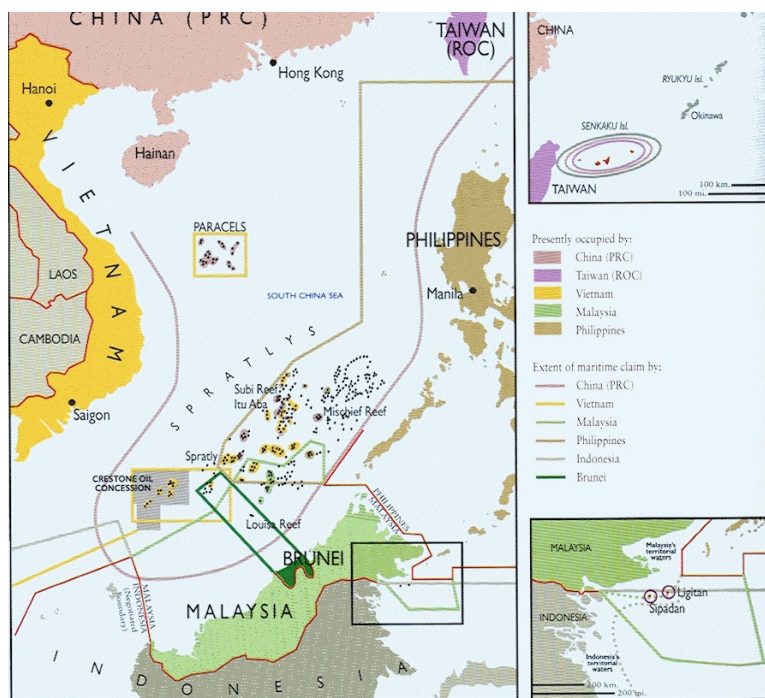
In 2000, China announced that it would adopt a bilateral joint development model to resolve the problems surrounding the disputed areas without discussing the sovereignty of the areas. A common code of conduct in respect of the disputed areas was then agreed by the ten ASEAN nations during a summit meeting in 2002. It was agreed that the conflicts would be resolved peacefully and the relevant declaration was affirmed in January 2007.

### Military maritime operations

In the South China Sea, China has frequently endorsed its maritime claims with force or intimidation. The PLAN is placing more emphasis on a greater routine presence, both within and outside territorial waters. Surface patrols have recently been spotted in the Sea of Japan, the South China Sea, the Philippine Sea and the eastern part of the Pacific Ocean. For the first time in the history of the modern Chinese navy, China has been conducting out-of-area operations: Chinese naval ships are protecting national convoys against piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. It has also been observed during the patrols that units are taking part in more complex exercises (including anti-submarine

<sup>16</sup> Li Jinming & Li Dexia, 'The Dotted Line on the Chinese Map of the South China Sea: a Note', 34 *Ocean Development and International Law* (2003), 287-195.

<sup>17</sup> [www.un.org/Depts/los/reference\\_files/chronological\\_lists\\_of\\_ratifications.htm#The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/reference_files/chronological_lists_of_ratifications.htm#The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea)



MARITIME CLAIMS IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

operations in deep water). In training and education, much attention is being devoted to joint operations. The number of submarine patrols has tripled over recent years, with destinations including the Philippine Sea and the western Pacific Ocean.

It is important to note that after its aggressive actions in respect of the Spratly Archipelago, China experienced such negative repercussions in its international relations that the emphasis now lies much more on diplomacy. The Chinese navy's main focus remains fixed on a potential conflict over Taiwan. A declaration of independence by Taiwan would constitute a *casus belli* for Peking.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> According to former ambassador, author and publicist Chas Freeman: 'The Taiwan issue is the only one with the potential to ignite a war between China and the United States.' - Quote from speech 'Beijing, Washington and the Shifting Balance of Prestige' on the CMSI Annual Conference, 10-11 May 2011, US Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.



MARITIME COOPERATION AGAINST PIRACY: HNLMS DE RUYTER AND THE CHINESE FRIGATE ZHOUSHAN (FOREGROUND) IN THE GULF OF ADEN.

### Analysis

The Chinese navy is primarily geared towards the defence of the motherland. China is trying to neutralise the military threat from the US by means of nuclear deterrence and sea-denial capabilities.

The country realises, however, that its SLOCs form its Achilles heel as regards economic growth and prosperity. By maintaining active relations with countries along these routes and by itself making an active contribution, China is trying to safeguard the security of its SLOCs. China nonetheless intends to become a key player in the maritime domain in order to guarantee the stability it requires.

China does not officially take part in multinational maritime operations but it did undertake in 2010 to assist in escorting transports from the UN World Food Program (WFP) off the coast of Somalia. China indicated recently that it would



take on the coordination of the convoys in the Gulf of Aden for the first three months of 2012.

Given the build-up and possible deployment of the Chinese fleet, the Chinese navy will for the time being be weak in terms of anti-submarine warfare and area air defence. The quality of maritime logistics and network-enabled capabilities will also need to be improved. Over the next 10 to 15 years, the Chinese navy will modernise further and develop into a competent organisation. The challenge will be to ensure that the integration and interoperability of modern weapons and command systems keep pace with their development and introduction.

There is a difference between what China says and what it does in terms of its arrangements in the South China Sea. On the one hand, UNCLOS has been ratified; on the other, China's claims are at odds with the rights of neighbouring countries. China is, however, no longer engaging in direct confrontation, but is now trying by means of pragmatism and diplomatic bilateral consultation to get the seal of approval for its claims in the South China Sea.

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### 2.3 India's maritime strategy

The largest democracy in the world is developing into a free market economy, in which the traces of a former autarkic policy are still clearly visible. India's economy has grown by an average of more than 7% over the last few years. The country's population is expected to grow from 1 billion inhabitants in 2005 to more than 1.5 billion by about 2050. The economy is made up of a variety of elements, ranging from simple rural farming companies to modern heavy industry and ICT corporations. Although around 50% of the working population are involved in agriculture and the fishing trade, the service industry is the main

driving force behind the economic growth. This sector accounts for approximately 50% of the national product and provides work for some 30% of the country's labour force.<sup>19</sup> The basis for this is the structure that was put in place by the United Kingdom as a former colonial power. India has been able to capitalise on its mainly English-speaking population and has developed into a large exporter of ICT services and software engineers.

The country has been largely unaffected by the global financial crisis, as Indian banks normally operate with caution and because of its relatively limited dependence on exports for economic growth. The economic growth figure has so far not dropped below 6.2%. The economic development of the past few years has boosted India's self-confidence. The country is a major power in the making. To become an actual world power, weak points will eventually need to be resolved, such as the widespread poverty, the inadequate social structure (residue of the officially scrapped caste system) and insufficient access to primary and higher education for large groups of the population. Partly because of its emerging economic position, India is demanding a prominent position in the international community and its institutions. This role on the world stage is being affirmed in various fora. India is now a fully-fledged member of the G20 and already hosted a G20 conference in 2002.

India's geopolitical situation also has a huge influence on the country's economic development. A stable periphery is extremely important for India. Security in southern Asia is becoming increasingly important for security throughout the world and the constant presence of terrorist groups and the unrest in many neighbouring countries make the region unsettled. The political instability in neighbouring Pakistan in particular, a country in possession of nuclear weapons, is a major cause for concern for the Indian government. There is even a possibility that Pakistan's nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of extremists. Terrorist organisations and resistance movements based in India's neighbouring countries have hit Indian society hard on several recent occasions.

In order to secure its long-term interests, it is important for India that the region remains free from outside intervention. India's government is, however, conscious of the fact that it also has economic and diplomatic interests outside

<sup>19</sup> CIA The World Factbook

the southern Asian region. As an emerging world power, India will shoulder its responsibilities and play an important role in the positional play in respect of the power balance between the US and China. In doing so, India will not lose sight of its own strategic interests. India's geographic shape means that there is a 7600-kilometre coastline and an EEZ of 2 million square kilometres. With an increasing dependence on supply and transportation by sea, it is clear that India's strategic environment is also of a maritime nature (SLOCs). This was in effect already recognised by India's first prime minister. As early as 1946, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru said: 'To be secure on land, we must be supreme at sea...'.<sup>7</sup>

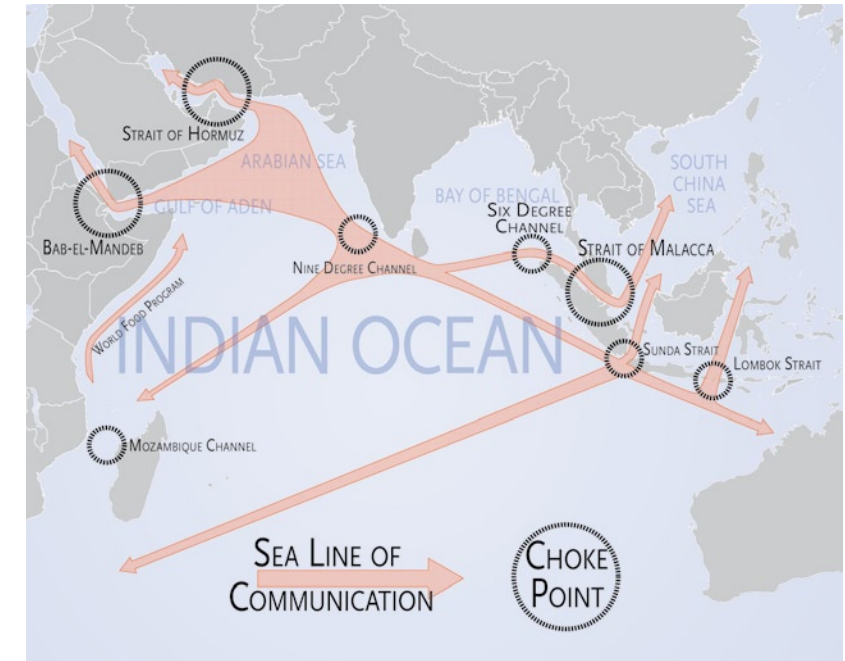
The Indian Ocean has many maritime intersections: the Strait of Hormuz, the Malacca Strait, the Lombok and Sunda Straits. One of the most vital sea lanes, the one from the Suez Canal and the Arabian Gulf to the Malacca Strait, runs directly past India. Most of the crude oil produced in the Gulf region is transported along this route. Any disturbance in the supply of oil can disrupt stability in the region. The International Energy Agency (IEA) predicts that the import of crude oil by China and India will have almost quadrupled by 2030, which means that stability in the SLOCs is of vital strategic importance for the whole of Southeast Asia.

As an emerging world power, India sees itself largely responsible for stability in the Indian Ocean, which means that a major effort is required in the maritime domain.

### India's Defence/Naval strategy

India's security problems are varied and complex. Internally, there are a number of conflicts based on extreme left-wing ideology and tribal and ethnic differences. Externally, India is always on the verge of war with archenemy Pakistan. India's national security objectives have developed along the lines of the main values – democracy, secularisation, peaceful coexistence and national economic development – and reflect the ambitions of a world power. These national security objectives are as follows:

- Defence of the national borders.
- Protection of life and property of civilians against war, terrorism, nuclear threat and militant activities.
- Defence of the country against instability and religious and other forms of radicalism and extremism originating in neighbouring states.



INDIAN OCEAN: SHIPPING ROUTES AND INTERSECTIONS (SOURCE: HCSS)

- Safeguarding the country against the use and threatened use of weapons of mass destruction.
- Development of materiel, equipment and technology that can contribute to security, particularly defensive military readiness, through intensive research, development and production, or the creation of the opportunity to transfer such materiel and expertise.
- Stimulation of further cooperation with and confidence in neighbouring countries and the implementation of mutually agreed confidence-building measures.
- Efforts to establish security and strategic dialogue with world powers and principal partners.

The task of fulfilling these national security objectives falls largely to India's military and paramilitary organisations. India's security philosophy has been heavily influenced by the terrorist attack in Mumbai in November 2008. Not only

did it turn out that a terrorist organisation based in Pakistan could mount an attack in India fairly easily, but also that the terrorists were able to enter the country from the sea without much difficulty. As a consequence of this attack, the 2009/10 defence budget was increased by about a third to approximately 34 billion USD.<sup>20</sup> It is expected to rise even further in the years to come.<sup>21</sup>

In the document 'India's Maritime Military Strategy' published on the website of India's Ministry of Defence, the following developments are listed as having underlined the need for the development of a maritime strategy:

- *An era of violent peace.* India recognises the existence of unstable geopolitical relations and various regional conflicts and crises, some of which are playing out in the Indian Ocean region.
- *Growing sea dependence.* India's economic resurgence is directly linked to overseas trade and raw materials. One of the main tasks of the Indian navy is to protect this trade.
- *India's maritime geography.* India's long coastal border gives the country unhindered access to the Indian Ocean. This necessitates a strategy that focuses on the ocean and not on the coast.
- *Supporting foreign policy.* A navy is ideally suited to 'winning friends and influencing people'.
- *Influencing developments ashore.* A maritime contribution to power projection is also seen as essential for influencing developments ashore.
- *The importance and complexity of the maritime domain.* Many factors play a role at sea. The thousands of trade ships, pleasure craft, offshore activities and fishing vessels bring with them an ever increasing economic dimension. In addition, national and ecological security also mean that the Indian government wants to have a better view of developments and events at sea.

Although India had already conducted its first Strategic Defense Review in 1998, it was not until 23 June 2004 that the Indian navy, as the first service, published a

maritime doctrine. This maritime doctrine was updated in August 2009.

The Strategic Defense Review identifies four main roles for the Indian navy:

- sea-based deterrent;
- perpetuation of economic and energy security;
- forward presence;
- maritime diplomacy.

It is argued that India needs a modern and well-trained navy in order to be equally able to support the ambitions of the economic resurgence and diplomatic interests outside southern Asia.

India's maritime strategy recognises that it is not a question of a static power situation in international relations, but that for India the permanent interests must be paramount. India's maritime strategy is, therefore, not based on an enemy picture but focuses on safeguarding Indian interests in the long term.

The following three aspects are key in this respect:

- 1 Neutralisation of the nuclear threat posed by its regional opponents, Pakistan and China. India has territorial disputes with both countries.
- 2 India needs credible maritime capabilities so that even in the pursuit of cooperative security arrangements (bilateral/multilateral initiatives and partnerships), account will be taken of its maritime power in the region. This is particularly important in the light of India's concern over the resurgence of China. China's growing demand for energy is linked to the Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean. Chinese anti-piracy patrols off the Somali coast demonstrate that very clearly. This presence clashes with India's desire to keep its ocean free from foreign influence. China's activities in building support points and bases that are located within India's area of interest, such as the modern port of Gwadar in Pakistan, are thus being monitored with suspicion.
- 3 The growing incidence of piracy and sea-based terror attacks. The threat of worldwide terrorism, piracy and international criminality demand a proactive approach. Forward positioning of maritime units is needed to enable a rapid response. Given that terrorism and piracy have global implications, a policy of cooperative involvement is regarded as the best option to minimise these threats.

In the updated maritime strategy, three prioritised focal areas have been explicitly added. The first priority is the approach to the Chinese navy. India has neither the capability nor the intention to emulate the Chinese navy. A constant

<sup>20</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2011, The SIPRI Military Expenditure Database.

<sup>21</sup> Raghav Narsalay, Mamta Kapur, Ryan Coffey, Aarohi Sen and Smriti Mathur. India in 2012. Tough times ahead: No room for complacency. January 2012, Page 15 quote 'Having spent close to US\$80 billion over the last decade on defense, the Indian government has decided to significantly ramp up expenditures over the next five years to an expected US\$100 billion.'



MILITARY PRESENCE OF SUPERPOWERS AROUND THE INDIAN OCEAN (SOURCE: HCSS)

maritime awareness and network-centric operations in combination with a reliable stand-off deterrent should keep the Chinese maritime ascent in check. The second focal area is the South China Sea and other areas in the western Pacific with the friendly coastal states located there. The third focal area is defined in deliberately vague terms as ‘other interests as a result of the diaspora and foreign investments’.

The revised maritime doctrine emphasises the joint nature of the navy’s operations and focuses on the spectrum in which conflicts may arise, India’s maritime environment and interests and the use of maritime power projection. The maritime doctrine presents warfighting as one of the navy’s four equal tasks along with diplomacy, police tasks and soft power.

The terrorist attack on Mumbai and the weakness that was revealed in the defence of the coastal border led to the Indian navy’s being made responsible for maritime security in the coastal regions and beyond. This occurs in close cooperation with the coastguard, the maritime police and the port authorities.

For the first time, the updated maritime doctrine makes explicit mention of the possibility of taking part in ‘police missions’ including those to combat terrorism and piracy, both independently and in cooperation with friendly foreign navy units or with the coastguard.

On the basis of the Indian navy’s stated objectives and ambitions, efforts will have to be made to expand and develop the following capabilities:

- Ensuring a permanent sea-based nuclear deterrent;
- Conducting prolonged surface operations a long way from India;
- Conducting submarine operations in the open sea and in coastal waters;
- Detecting and neutralising enemy submarines;
- Conducting combined operations in multinational groups;
- Conducting joint operations at theatre level, including amphibious operations and stand-off land attacks.

### Development of India’s navy

Over the last few years, India’s navy has already undergone extensive modernisation and expansion with the aim of becoming a recognised blue-water navy. Together, the coastguard and the Indian navy have around 130 ships. An impressive new-build and procurement programme has been set up to underpin India’s strategic ambitions. The Maritime Capabilities Perspective Plan 2022 makes provisions for the proposed procurement of two training ships, five offshore patrol vessels (OPVs), three landing platform docks (LPDs), seven frigates, six conventional submarines, eight corvettes, 28 anti-submarine frigates, eight minehunters and one aircraft carrier.

The nuclear doctrine also requires the development of a maritime branch of the nuclear deterrent. *INS Arihant* is the first indigenous nuclear-powered submarine. This submarine will be used to accrue the expertise required to build India’s own seagoing nuclear deterrent in the future. The Indian navy took delivery of the first *Akula*-class nuclear-powered attack submarine on lease from Russia in the middle of 2010.

The *Viraat*-class aircraft carrier (formerly the British *HMS Hermes*) will be complemented by the former Russian aircraft carrier *Gorshkov* in 2012/13. Work is also being done on two indigenous aircraft carriers, the first of which will be commissioned in mid-2014.





INDIA'S AIRCRAFT CARRIER INS VIRAAT IN PORT. IN THE FOREGROUND IS THE FRIGATE INS BEAS.  
(SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

The aim is that, by 2022, India will have a navy (including coastguard) numbering around 160 units, including three aircraft carriers, 60 large surface units (frigates and destroyers), three nuclear-powered submarines with ballistic weapons, five nuclear-powered attack submarines and a maritime air component with some 400 aircraft. India has thus made the strategic decision to end its dependence on third parties and so intends to develop and build more and more of this capacity itself.

It is not only in terms of materiel that India wants to be autonomous. India's navy is also feeling the need to turn more of its attention to international cooperation and to its doctrines and concepts. To provide the intellectual basis, India's navy has taken the first steps by establishing an autonomous think-tank – the National Maritime Foundation – and by setting up a Directorate of Strategy Concepts and Transformation within the maritime headquarters.



COLLABORATION AGAINST PIRACY: SOUTH KOREAN AND DUTCH NAVAL OFFICERS VISIT THE INDIAN FRIGATE INS DELHI IN THE PORT OF SALALAH (OMAN) (SOURCE: S.J.J. BOTH)

### Ratification of UNCLOS

India ratified UNCLOS, with the exception of one article, on 29 June 1995.<sup>22</sup> It is only with Bangladesh that India has a maritime border dispute in respect of the boundaries in the Bay of Bengal, which has been brought to the attention of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS). ITLOS is an independent legal organisation, which was set up by the UN and which can settle disputes legally in the event of any differences in interpretation or application of the UNCLOS treaty. India would appear to be entirely willing to conform to the rules of international law.

### Military operations

As a budding superpower, India regards the Indian Ocean as its *mare nostrum*. In recent years, India has also shown that it has become more expansive in the use

<sup>22</sup> [www.un.org/Depts/los/reference\\_files/chronological\\_lists\\_of\\_ratifications.htm#The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/reference_files/chronological_lists_of_ratifications.htm#The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea)

of its military forces. In 2000, the Indian navy trained with Vietnam in the South China Sea, something which met with a disapproving reaction from China. In 2002, an Indian frigate took over the patrol tasks in the Strait of Malacca from a US frigate, which meant that the latter could be deployed for Operation *Enduring Freedom*. In 2003, three potential adversaries – China, Pakistan and India – conducted a combined maritime exercise. Indian frigates have been patrolling in the Gulf of Aden on a regular basis since 2008 as part of the fight against piracy. Although this is still a small contribution, it does show that India is growing as a maritime power and is a player to be reckoned with.

India's navy has a close relationship with the US Navy and, over the last decade in particular, cooperation has become increasingly intense. The current chief of the Indian navy said in an interview that the United States had played a key advisory role in the development and build-up of India's existing navy. That cooperation has been further institutionalised at various levels, one example being an intensive, combined training programme in the Indian Ocean.

The Indian navy has drawn up the following supplementary objectives in the context of the cooperation:

- Acquisition of operational and doctrinal knowledge;
- Exchange of knowledge in respect of capability enhancement and build-up;
- To obtain best practice information;
- To achieve interoperability for the benefit of out-of-area operations;
- To increase the Indian navy's maritime confidence by sharing information.

### Analysis

While western navies have recently been focusing on operations in coastal waters, India's navy has been shifting its focus to operations out at sea in the Indian Ocean. Although the Indian navy is not seeking to emulate the Chinese navy, the two countries are coming up against each other to a certain extent in the Indian Ocean. China wants to increase its presence in the region in order to secure its SLOCs. The various bases that China is building in the region and Chinese anti-piracy patrols off the Somali coast are clear evidence of this. The presence of other navies affects India's power of influence in the region, as a result of which protecting national interests and increasing regional influence are automatically at the expense of the other. India and China are both involved in major construction programmes to increase their maritime capacity. Given that China is also the USA's 'natural' adversary, the latter has responded to this

development by entering into a strategic alliance with India. Participation in international missions, even in the primary area of interest (Somalia), is still limited in terms of size and ambition.

Despite India's impressive fleet-building programme, logistic support at sea remains a weak element for the country's navy. A navy with ambitions such as those formulated by the Indian navy cannot make do with the two existing tankers, as this limits the strategic range of the fleet. While it is true that the navy has reasonable amphibious capabilities, they can only be deployed regionally and on a small scale because of the limited logistic support.

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## 2.4 Russia: renewed military maritime aspirations

The largest country in the world, Russia, is almost twice as big as the second largest, Canada. In terms of the number of inhabitants, Russia is in ninth place, behind countries such as China, India and the US (1, 2 and 3), and Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nigeria (6, 7 and 8). At the time of the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s, the economy was, after that of the United States, the largest in the world. The transition from a state-controlled economy to a market economy after the dissolution of the Soviet Union led, however, to a huge decline in gross national product (GDP). Russia now stands behind Canada as the twelfth largest economy in the world, with oil and gas as the main source of income.

After the drop in GDP following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, in 2000 Russia entered a period of robust economic growth based mainly on gas exports. In 2008, growth was still at 5.6%. It is that very dependence on the export of gas and, to a lesser extent, grain that meant that Russia has been hit hard by the global economic crisis. In the first three months of 2009 alone, the economy shrank by 10.2%.

In both word and deed, the Russian government has shown that gas supplies will be used as an instrument to exert influence on the international community. Gas exports continue to be Russia's source of income that keeps the economy afloat and enables the modernisation of the armed forces. Half of Russian gas exports go to European countries, which means that Europe and Russia depend on each other. Russia needs Western technology and hundreds of billions of euros to finance the construction and maintenance of the energy infrastructure. In this power play with Russia, therefore, Europe's position is not purely a dependent one and its attitude is one of constructive criticism. Speaking on relations with Russia, Andris Piebalgs, the European Energy Commissioner until 2010, stated that the EU should seek a dialogue with the Russians in order to create a favourable climate for investment and a reliable legal framework. That is a necessity for both parties.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, for fifteen years until 2008, the Russian armed forces tried to reorganise, but failed time and time again. The legacy was obsolete materiel and also a 'soviet' organisation. Presidents Yeltsin and Putin had designated reorganisation of the armed forces as a priority. This was delayed, however, because of the lack of real (political) will and the conflict in Chechnya. The brief war with Georgia in August 2008 was what in the end prompted President Medvedev to launch a serious reorganisation. This war had been won mainly by numerical superiority, basic military skills and the support of highly-motivated paramilitaries from South Ossetia who were familiar with the difficult terrain. An analysis of the military operations had brought to light major shortcomings in respect of unit composition, training, command and control, materiel and doctrine. Grave doubts had arisen as to whether the armed forces were indeed a reliable instrument for the support of foreign and security policy and as to whether the armed forces themselves would have sufficient conventional capabilities to guarantee the security of the Russian Federation. In September 2008, a draft document was to launch the reorganisation and modernisation of the Russian armed forces. This document was entitled 'The Future Outlook of the Russian Federation Armed Forces and Priorities for its Creation for the period 2009-2020'. The financial crisis has led to cost-cutting in Russia too, but the Russian government is giving high priority to the reorganisation and modernisation of the military. Whereas cuts of 15% are being imposed on other ministries, these are being limited to 9% in the case of Defence.

### Russian military/maritime doctrine

The plans that were then made after September 2008 came under a great deal of criticism because they had been drawn up without a strategic rationale; in other words, a military doctrine. There was no general agreement about what the threat to the Russian Federation was in the short, medium and long term or what the core tasks should therefore be for the armed forces. On 5 February 2010, after a long and laborious process, Russia presented its new military doctrine for 2010 (MD 2010).

The new doctrine is a political-strategic policy document which concentrates almost exclusively on the 'what': what is the current geopolitical and military context in which the Russian Federation is operating, what are the threats faced by the Russian Federation, what are the tasks and objectives for the armed forces, etc. The document does not concern itself with the 'how': how will the armed forces be deployed? Russian Military Doctrine distinguishes between external military dangers, internal military dangers and non-military dangers. The main external military danger is defined as 'the desire to use NATO's military power for tasks that contravene the values of International Law and to bring the military infrastructure closer to the borders of the Russian Federation, including expansion of the organisation'. Other external military dangers concern the destabilisation of the (nuclear) balance of power, such as the deployment of anti-missile systems. Lastly, there is the spread of terrorism and of ethnic and/or religious violence.

The 2010 Military Doctrine is very land-specific in its definitions, with references to air and space defence. There are no service-specific sections. There is, however, mention of specific Russian maritime interests, such as the counter-piracy effort, security of shipping and the safeguarding of the economic security of the Russian Federation in the contiguous maritime zone and on the world's seas. The specific Russian interest in the Arctic region is also mentioned. Siberia is thought to hold around 586 billion barrels of oil reserves. The melting of the icecap could make the North-Eastern Passage an important transit route to the Far East; the journey of 11,000 miles from Korea to Europe via the Suez Canal would then be 3,000 miles shorter. That would not only save commercial shipping a substantial amount in fuel costs, but would also cut the journey by 10 days.

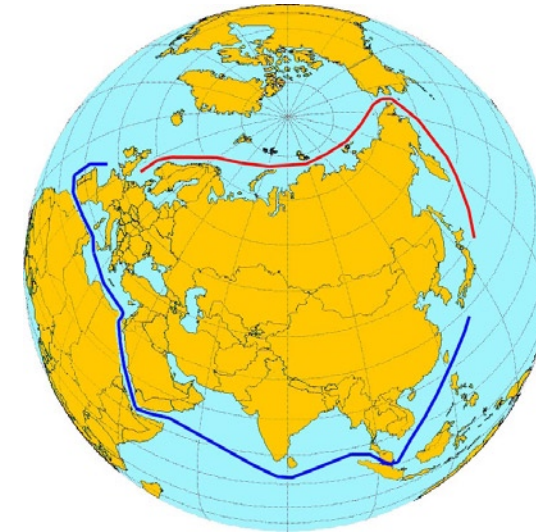


The main mission for the Russian navy in peacetime is, just as it was for the Soviet navy, to guarantee the strategic nuclear deterrent. Within the parameters of the 2010 Military Doctrine, the Russian navy's task is to protect the Russian Federation's territorial integrity and vital maritime interests. These are specifically free access to ocean resources and the prevention of any political military bloc from dominating sea zones and SLOCs that are vital to Russia, particularly the sea zones bordering on the Russian Federation. Further navy tasks include maintaining a naval presence in all oceans and supporting Russian foreign policy. In wartime, the Russian navy plays an integral part in all missions and activities by the armed forces of the Russian Federation, both conventional and nuclear. These missions require a navy that can operate on the high seas and has the capabilities to cope with any possible threat.

#### Development and build-up of the Russian navy

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian navy was drastically reduced, primarily as a result of the split between the various former Soviet states and because of a lack of money. Many ships were sold, scrapped or laid up. In the glory days before 1990, the Soviet Union had around 430 submarines and large surface ships and the Soviet navy, in terms of gross tonnage, was not much smaller than that of the US. The Soviet Union's military shipbuilding capacity was also split. Russia now has just two thirds of the Soviet shipbuilding capacity (around 170 shipyards and support companies remained under Russian control) as a result of the secession of various former Soviet republics (Ukraine, Baltic states). This capacity is partly tasked with demolition work as Russia has committed herself in international agreements to dismantling its disused nuclear submarines in accordance with international environmental norms. The result is that in fifteen years the number of Russian warships has dropped to 260 (2008), the average age of which is 21 years. Many of them are poorly maintained, if at all. Personnel numbers in the navy have fallen by 60% to approximately 142,000, excluding the naval air service and marines. Most of them are conscripts and poorly trained. The current navy's approximately 260 submarines and larger surface ships are divided among four fleets. In order of size, these are the Northern fleet, the Pacific fleet, the Black Sea fleet and the Baltic fleet.

The economic prosperity of the last ten years has opened up new possibilities. Defence expenditure has risen steadily. The SSBN patrols were resumed in 2001; the number of patrols has increased further every year since then. Out-of-area operations are once again being conducted, involving visits to Europe, South



THE NORTH-EASTERN PASSAGE (RED) COMPARED TO THE CURRENT SHIPPING ROUTE  
(SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

America and Asia. New plans have also been announced in relation to materiel. In 2005, the State Programme of Armaments (GPV) 2007-2015 earmarked 169 billion USD for military acquisitions over a 9-year period. The aim was that, by 2015, 70% of the materiel could be described as modern. As a result of the economic crisis, however, President Medvedev announced in 2009 that work was being done on a new GPV 2011-2020. This new GPV will be more modest in terms of size, but in 2009 the defence budget was still 3% of GDP. With the announcement of the new GPV, Medvedev also stated that the modernisation of the armed forces was proceeding on schedule. Analysts see this as confirmation that the budgetary conditions for the Russian defence department are as favourable as ever.

A secondary objective in maintaining the lion's share of the military investment budget is to shepherd the defence industry through the crisis. Approximately 25% of the investment budget is expected to be available for the navy. Plans and construction programmes are well advanced for the building of new SSBNs (*Borei* class), SSKs, six 60,000-ton aircraft carriers (similar to British/French design of the *Prince of Wales* class), six guided weapon cruisers/destroyers, four to twenty frigates (*Gorshkov* class), three corvettes and various types of landing craft. The problem here is the shipbuilding industry: in a report in July 2009 (in



THE RUSSIAN DESTROYER RFS ADMIRAL LEVCHENKO BELONGING TO THE NORTHERN FLEET, EN ROUTE THROUGH THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA TO THE GULF OF ADEN IN JUNE 2010 TO ESCORT CONVOYS.

Independent Military Review), this was described as ‘incapable of producing warships in either quantity or at the level of quality required by the navy’. The Commander in Chief of the Russian navy, Admiral Vladimir Vysotski, declared that he had no intention of spending billions of roubles on the maintenance of outdated ships and that he was thus open to acquisitions via foreign shipyards. Discussions were subsequently held with DCNS in France and Thales UK in the United Kingdom in order to establish a collaborative agreement. A delegation also visited the Netherlands in this context. After the visit of the Russian Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, to Paris in November 2009, the French government announced that it would consider an official request by the Russian government to buy four LPHs (*Mistral* class). This could soon result in the delivery of four amphibious ships to the Russian navy, despite protests from the Baltic states and from the US.

Another problem is the naval base in the Black Sea. This base is hired from Ukraine, which is not overly enthusiastic about this arrangement. In April 2010,

after lengthy negotiations, Russia and Ukraine agreed to extend the rental of the Russian base in the Black Sea by 25 years. For this alone, the Russian parliament has set aside 92 billion roubles (3 billion USD).

Russia’s political ambition in a maritime context is to obtain satisfactory blue-water capabilities alongside nuclear deterrence. As outlined above, the accomplishment of this political objective will not be easy. The average age of Russian naval units is 21 years and rising. The available shipbuilding capacity is insufficient to reduce the average age of the navy or to expand. An example of Russia’s lack of shipbuilding capabilities is the *Borei* project. The building of the *Borei*-class submarines, which are to guarantee Russia’s nuclear deterrent in the future, was commenced in 1996, but the first sea trials did not start until 2009. The ship’s ballistic missiles are still in the test phase. Only recently, in June 2011, did the first launch test from the submarine take place.

#### Ratification of UNCLOS

Russia ratified UNCLOS in 1997.<sup>23</sup> On 2 August 2007, the Russian submarine *Mir I* planted a metal Russian flag on the floor of the Arctic Ocean to support the claim for the expansion of the Russian EEZ. These two acts appear contradictory, but UNCLOS does not in itself preclude the latter. Article 76 of UNCLOS allows for a state to have sovereign rights to seabed resources outside the EEZ if the continental shelf extends beyond the 200 nautical miles to a maximum of 350 nautical miles. A treaty state must, however, submit any such claim within ten years of the date on which this treaty came into force for that state. In 2001, Russia submitted a claim to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) for the mineral resources of the continental shelf at the Lomonosov Ridge up to the 350-mile limit. This commission has an advisory role and can only pronounce on boundary disputes between states if the states involved consent to this. The commission neither rejected nor affirmed the Russian claim, but urged the Russian delegation to provide a better argument in support of its claim. Despite the public reiteration of its claim, Russia respects the national borders between the Arctic states (Norway, Denmark, Canada and the US).

23 [www.un.org/Depts/los/reference\\_files/chronological\\_lists\\_of\\_ratifications.htm#The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/reference_files/chronological_lists_of_ratifications.htm#The%20United%20Nations%20Convention%20on%20the%20Law%20of%20the%20Sea)

How the North Pole region will be divided up further will depend on scientific evidence and diplomatic negotiations between the Arctic states. At the Arctic Summit held in 2008, the Arctic states agreed to seek a definitive solution within the legal framework of the UNCLOS. On 27 April 2010, after more than 40 years of discussion, Russia and Norway reached agreement on their maritime boundary in the Barents Sea. As a result, a large section of the disputed area became available for investors. Vast oil and gas reserves are expected to be found there, as the area is located between the gigantic Russian *Shtokman* gas field and two Norwegian oil and gas fields.

### Maritime operations

Russian operations are still being conducted within the letter of the international agreements. The planting of the Russian flag on the ocean floor is one example of that.

Russia is also taking an active part in securing the SLOCs. Since 2008, when the Russian frigate *Neustrashimy* sailed from the Baltic Sea to the Gulf of Aden, the Russian navy has maintained an almost permanent presence of warships around the Horn of Africa. It is not only operations serving national interests that are being conducted: in 2010, Russia also escorted a transport for the World Food Programme (WFP). The out-of-area operations with visits to ports in Europe, South America and Asia would also suggest aspirations beyond Russian interests in a narrow sense. In April 2010, the UN Security Council accepted a Russian proposal to set up a special body for the prosecution of pirates, including a special chamber at the national court of one of the countries in the region.

### Analysis

Although Russia is no longer the superpower it once was, the country still has considerable global influence, even with a relatively small economy, partly because of its vast wealth of strategic raw materials.

Russia's political ambition appears to be to acquire serious blue-water naval capabilities, a fact demonstrated by the Russian rhetoric to build six aircraft carriers. Russia cannot, however, develop these capabilities in the short term by itself. A possible deal with France has not yet been completed, but seems likely to be limited to landing craft, partly because of the protests from the Baltic states and the US. The verbal force should be interpreted as a means to evoke the illusion that Russia is a superpower rather than that actually being the case.



RUSSIAN MARITIME CLAIMS IN THE NORTH POLE REGION

- 1 NORTH POLE: IN 2007, RUSSIAN METAL FLAG PLACED ON THE OCEAN FLOOR AT 4,000M.
- 2 LOMONOSOV RIDGE: UNDERWATER MOUNTAIN RIDGE, WHICH RUSSIA REGARDS AS A NATURAL EXTENSION OF SIBERIA AND THUS AS PART OF ITS TERRITORY.
- 3 200-MILE LIMIT OF THE EEZS OF THE ARCTIC STATES
- 4 AREA FOR WHICH RUSSIA SUBMITTED A CLAIM TO CLCS FOR THE SOVEREIGN RIGHTS TO THE MINERAL RESOURCES.

This approach could be defined as 'talk loudly and carry a small stick' rather than 'speak softly and carry a big stick'. Part of the considerable defence budget is being used to modernise the weakened maritime defence industry and to help it through the crisis.

The new Russian Military Doctrine is realistic in respect of Russia's military capabilities, as in terms of maritime military capabilities it focuses purely on the Arctic region and on combating Somali piracy. As long as the income from the



sale of raw materials is not being converted into additional and more up-to-date military materiel, Russia is making clever use of the politico-legal game to protect its offshore interests. In doing so, Russia is adhering to the international rules of the game, but in the meantime trying (on the basis of those rules) to validate its claim for the right to explore and exploit as large an area of the ocean floor as possible. Maritime striking power must not be confused with maritime influence. In many respects, the Russian navy no longer meets the criteria of a superpower but the combination of shorter distances and time required for deployment and the right diplomatic actions could result in a considerable maritime influence in the waters closer to home.

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MARITIME CO-OPERATION AGAINST PIRACY: CONSULTATIONS ON BOARD THE RUSSIAN DESTROYER RFS VINOGRADOV WITH THE STAFF OF NATO OPERATION OCEAN SHIELD LED BY OF THE DUTCH COMMODORE MICHIEL HIJMANS (JANUARY 2011)

## 3 Existing superpowers

*The United States brags about its political system, but the President says one thing during the election, something else when he takes office, something else at midterm and something else when he leaves.*

Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997)

### 3.1 The European Union's (non-)military maritime strategy

The European Union (EU) is now made up of 27 European countries. In the brief history of the EU and its predecessors, the main emphasis has been on economic cooperation in order to form an economic bloc capable of competing with other economic powers such as the US and Japan. Cooperation and eventual unification in all other areas has always been a difficult process, given the historical sovereignty and national interests of the European states. One of those areas is the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The historical account of this political process would be getting too far off the subject here. When the Treaty of Lisbon was signed in 2008, however, an important step forward was taken, namely the appointment of a separate High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The 27 members of the EU together have a considerable military capacity, but deployability is low because of a lack of cooperation. The main problem is the ambivalence on the part of the individual member states in their political decision making in respect of military deployment.

The second organisation that plays an important role in European security is NATO. This politico-military alliance has been the cornerstone of European security since World War II. NATO was set up as a security umbrella for Western Europe against the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact and is based on transatlantic solidarity. After the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, many of the former member states actually joined NATO. NATO now comprises 24 European countries as well

as the US and Canada. Given that NATO's primary *raison d'être* disappeared with the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the organisation was seeking a new one for some time. In 2010, the Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was adopted, reaffirming the framework of tasks and mission. NATO's military capacity is extensive and highly interoperable. The decision making for deployment has a clearer structure than that of the EU, but is, unlike that of the EU, limited to military operations.

Superpowers are usually able to exert a decisive influence on world events. Today, this ability to influence history stems from the economic and cultural role that a country or bloc plays. From a more historical point of view, it was measured in terms of military power and the capability of worldwide military intervention. It is often suggested that military strength automatically stems from economic strength. This is more complicated in the case of the European Union. The EU was set up partly to prevent any single member state from wielding hegemonic power within Europe. The EU regards internal security as a broad and all-encompassing concept, ranging from (international) law enforcement through public health to border controls and the upholding of human rights. Crime prevention sometimes results in a separate collaborative group, such as the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre - Narcotics (MAOC-N), which focuses on the police task of combating the supply of drugs to Europe. Because the European Union still lacks the political strength needed for military intervention, some experts are inclined not to classify the EU as a superpower.

It is said that Europe is still 'unfinished' as long as it is unable to play the geopolitical role that is worthy of its economic position. Despite all its shortcomings, the EU is seen as a spectacular success, both in economic terms and because of the way in which it has brought peace and stability to the continent. It is not without good reason that the model has huge international appeal. Mark Leonard, author of the book 'Why Europe will run the 21st century', goes as far as to say that the EU has so much influence because it does not project 'hard power' – military and economic – but 'soft power' by means of persuasion and by setting a good example. The cooperation in the EU is a model for others, such as the African Union. There is also an increasingly visible 'division of work' between the EU and NATO in respect of military operations.

The problem is that, as a politico-economic bloc, the EU has the potential to achieve superpower status, but that NATO has the military structure. The EU's

'advantage' is, however, that it represents the sovereignty rights of the member states in terms of international law and that 'agreements' can thus be made centrally, while NATO is an alliance without any sovereign rights. In the fight against Somali piracy, for example, this difference manifests itself in the agreements with surrounding countries in respect of the prosecution of arrested suspects. Arrangements have been made for the use of NATO assets in an EU context, in what is known as the Berlin Plus agreement. The problem here is, once again, that the European NATO member states and the member states of the EU are not the same.

NATO's structure, military interoperability and robust decision-making process lend themselves much better to short-term operations at the higher end of the force spectrum. The EU is better equipped for the longer-term reconstruction missions at the lower end of the force spectrum. Membership of both organisations is also popular with virtually all European countries, as it is regarded as a guarantee for stable economic growth in a safe environment. The expansion of both organisations is, therefore, used to extend the 'western' sphere of influence. At this time, both the EU and NATO would appear to have reached their maximum size for the moment, within the international field of influence. Looking at all this, the inclination would still be to regard Europe as a superpower for the purpose of this publication.

### European security strategy

The Treaty of Lisbon represents a new level of ambition in terms of defence and security policy. The European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) will in future be called the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and is part of the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), known as the 'second pillar'. More important than the name are some of the changes in its content:

- The post of High Commissioner for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy is being upgraded. Supported by a European diplomatic service, this official is, as the vice-chairman of the Commission, the EU's *de facto* minister of foreign affairs. External policy and CSDP are thus in the same hand, albeit with different rules.
- The so-called 'Petersburg tasks' are the missions that the EU must be able to conduct. These were supplemented with the Lisbon Treaty and now include disarmament actions, humanitarian and rescue missions, military advice and assistance, conflict prevention and peacekeeping, as well as military contributions to crisis management (peace-making / stabilisation).



- The Protocol relating to the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO). This enables cooperation between member states in respect of military capabilities.
- The Lisbon Treaty introduces a clause about solidarity and mutual defence. This focuses on terrorist attacks and disasters as well as on armed aggression in the territory of a member state. This clause also explicitly confirms NATO as the basis for the collective defence of its members.

The European Council adopted the European Security Strategy (ESS) in 2003. This stipulates the principles and clear objectives for the defence of the EU's security interests on the basis of common values. The ESS has mapped out the main security risks currently facing the European Union. These are reaffirmed in full in a report entitled 'Security in a changing world' issued in December 2008. The threats facing Europe are terrorism and organised crime, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, cyber crime, disruption of energy security and climate change. To deal with these threats effectively, the EU maintains that, in a world of global threats, global markets and global media, security and prosperity depend to an ever-increasing extent on an effective multilateral system. The aim of the EU is, therefore, to achieve a stronger international community, properly functioning international institutions and a rule-based international order.

The Common Security and Defence Policy is still being set up, but has already made considerable progress after 20 missions. The EU is recognised as an important facilitator of a better world order. This is down to Europe's entirely unique approach, in which the involvement of regional parties and popular support are key. Full use of the EU's security potential in the future will require more political agreement between the member states, so that the structure can also be improved.

The purpose of and the need for NATO has been set out once again in the new Strategic Concept. With its existing basic aim in mind, 'to safeguard the freedom, common heritage, and civilisation of its members', and the awareness that the threats to the Euratlantic region have become more mobile and more diverse, NATO has defined new tasks. The Strategic Concept is mainly a political document, but the aim is to create a clear picture of the Alliance's military obligations in the current context. In today's world, NATO needs more flexibility and longer range. Part of that is to enter into 'partnerships' (examples are the countries around the Mediterranean and in the Middle East). Future missions (as is now the case in



COMBINED EUROPEAN MARITIME OPERATIONS: HNLMS AMSTERDAM (LEFT) SUPPLYING THE FRENCH AMPHIBIOUS SHIP FS TONNERRE OFF THE COAST OF IVORY COAST, IN PREPARATION FOR A POSSIBLE EVACUATION OPERATION (JANUARY 2011).

Afghanistan) will for the most part be conducted in a wide network of international actors, in which NATO could play either a leading or a supporting role.

NATO sees its partnership with the EU as unique and vital. NATO's new Strategic Concept will take serious account of the fact that the Treaty of Lisbon is partly designed to structure and strengthen European military capabilities. Full complementarity of the two organisations in military terms is vital for a comprehensive and cost-effective approach to security in Europe and in missions in which both organisations are involved. The problem is that non-EU NATO members and non-NATO EU members will first need to be completely transparent about their part. There will only be a real European Strategy when NATO and the EU are truly complementary.

### European maritime strategy

There is as yet no European maritime strategy. With the expansion referred to above, the EU has now reached its natural limits. To the north, the EU is bounded by the Arctic Ocean, to the west by the Atlantic and to the south by the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The EU has thus become a *de facto* peninsula which, in a geopolitical sense, is only bordered on the landside by Russia. The



GERMAN MARITIME PATROL PLANE READY FOR DEPLOYMENT IN THE EU OPERATION ATALANTA TO COMBAT SOMALI PIRACY (PHOTO: EUNAVFOR)

economies of northwest Europe in particular – the EU’s economic engine – depend directly on international trade and need unrestricted access to the open sea for their import and export activities.

It is interesting to note that the military-strategic approach to security does not feature in the EU’s maritime policy. What there is in the way of maritime strategy stems directly from the military strategy and maritime military capabilities are regarded as a means to support the military strategic aims. Some thought is given to the negative effects of military operations on the environment (disruption of fishing, environmental damage), but the EU’s maritime policy focuses mainly on the creation of optimum conditions for the sustainable use of the seas and oceans to enable the growth of the maritime sectors and the coastal regions.

In January 2011, NATO presented a new maritime strategy, in which it specified four spearheads for its maritime forces:

- deterrence and collective defence;
- crisis management;
- cooperative security through collaboration, dialogue and interaction;
- maritime security.

With its new maritime strategy, NATO is focusing on regional security and stability and contributing to conflict prevention and the promotion of dialogue. From this starting point, positive interaction and cooperation are sought with other relevant international maritime actors, such as the United Nations, the European Union and the International Maritime Organisation. Interestingly, NATO has thus shifted the emphasis and the military approach is being placed in a wider context. In the new strategy, NATO’s maritime security spearhead is also being used to focus on securing our shared natural resources, which is closely in keeping with the maritime vision of the EU. It is important to note here that NATO is not advocating an immediate change in its military capacity, but has started a process in which the development of capabilities goes hand in hand with the changing security situation.

In their ‘Vision for future roles of European navies’ (2005) and ‘Developing a European interagency strategy for maritime security operations’ (2007), the CHENS (Chiefs of European navies) have tried to provide an impetus for the further development of a European maritime strategy and capability enhancement. Both papers have been written as a recommendation (a roadmap leading to a strategy) to both the NATO Military Committee and the European Military Committee. To date, however, this has not yet led to any political decision making. They have, on the other hand, contributed to increased ‘European’ awareness in respect of the maritime domain.

For both NATO and the EU, the counter-piracy operations around the Horn of Africa would seem to be the blueprint for future maritime security operations. Both the EU (Operation Atalanta) and NATO (Operation Ocean Shield) are active in the area. There is no question of any competition here, but rather a conscious choice for the practical deployment of (limited numbers of) naval ships. It gives European countries the chance to choose somewhere where the ‘European flag’ might be more acceptable for the region but where non-NATO European countries can also participate.

#### **Development of European maritime-military capabilities**

Despite a substantial expansion of member states, the EU (NATO and non-NATO) has nonetheless seen a decrease in the number of military-maritime platforms in recent years. Constant cuts and rationalisations on the part of individual nations have led to reductions in the number of units available. By way of illustration: the level of defence spending by European NATO states fell on average from 2% to

1.65% of the GDP between 2000 and 2008. For the European non-NATO countries, the drop was from 1.39% to 1.15% of the GDP over the same period. In the current climate of persisting government deficits, this fall is expected to continue. Just as there is no permanent European army, neither is there a European navy. The development of maritime capacity can only be measured in terms of the number of maritime units which can potentially work together. The number of available maritime units, namely the number of frigates and patrol vessels, means that capabilities are limited to constabulary tasks in open seas. It is only in terms of amphibious units that levels are still adequate (power projection).

EU NUMBERS	1995 (15 MEMBERS)	2010 (27 MEMBERS)
Submarines	108	71
Patrol vessels	235	197
Frigates	197	163
Amphibious units	29	32

TABLE 1: NUMBERS OF MARITIME UNITS IN EU COUNTRIES

Various EU nations have indicated further reductions in their defence budget, and thus the navy budget, as part of the national spending cuts. An important example is the United Kingdom, as a main contributor, which has announced in the Strategic Defence and Security Review that there will be reductions in personnel as well as in the number of ships. Other countries are expected to follow suit with definitive cuts. This will exacerbate the European problem of available maritime units as opposed to the requirement even further. The answer lies in better cooperation and a common materiel policy. In December 2008, the EU Council had already adopted the Declaration on Strengthening Capabilities, in which the ambitions for conducting crisis management operations were set out (implementation of the Headline Goal 2010). This applies to both military and civil operations. The declaration gave priority to the development of civil capabilities and called upon nations to come up with innovative methods to develop (maritime) capabilities, including pooling and multinational asset management. The wheels are turning extremely slowly on this because of national industrial interests and the issue of sovereignty. The trend is that countries that are members of the EU and NATO are developing initiatives that need to enhance the (maritime) military capabilities for both organisations. Examples of (successful) projects are the European Amphibious Initiative and



EUROPEAN AMPHIBIOUS CAPACITY: BRITISH MARINES TRAINING IN CRETE (ROYAL NAVY PHOTO)

the European Carrier Group Initiative. Further examples outside the maritime domain are the Eindhoven Movement Coordination Centre, the European Air Transport Fleet, the AWACS aircraft and the Strategic Airlift Capability.

Ratification of UNCLOS

The EU ratified UNCLOS in December 2003. Both the European Union and the individual nations abide by the rules of international law.<sup>24</sup>

Maritime operations

Up to now, maritime operations in a purely EU context have in effect been confined to countering Somali piracy. The EU’s special maritime strength comes well and truly into its own in operations like these at the lower end of the force spectrum. The EU is able to combine military and civil capabilities to produce a comprehensive approach to the conflict. NATO cannot achieve this combination as it is primarily a military organisation. In NATO operations, units first have to

24 [www.un.org/Depts/los/reference\\_files/chronological\\_lists\\_of\\_ratifications.htm#The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/reference_files/chronological_lists_of_ratifications.htm#The%20United%20Nations%20Convention%20on%20the%20Law%20of%20the%20Sea)



EUROPEAN NAVAL SHIPS IN THE SUEZ CANAL, ON THEIR WAY TO TAKE PART IN NATO'S OPERATION OCEAN SHIELD (NATO PHOTO)

be placed under national command before proceeding with police actions (service, enforcement and investigation). The EU's Operation Atalanta in the Gulf of Aden is a good example of a successful maritime mission, in which coordination with other actors features prominently. Further tasks are limited to surveillance/tracking by various organisations of the maritime picture around Europe (both in a NATO context and outside it) in support of maritime missions (real-time picture). In addition, and on the basis of national availability, incidental support is also provided for combating drugs smuggling, for example by the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N).

### Analysis

The European maritime strategy is a continuation of the EU's soft-power approach and is primarily focused on the sustainable ecological and economic development of the seas and oceans around the EU. The evaluation of the military developments in this area is left to the individual nations. It should be noted, however, that an initiative has been started within the EU to improve control of the maritime domain. Europe has realised that its maritime flank is vulnerable

and that the maritime domain is highly accessible for criminal activities. The ambition is to create a cohesive system by integrating existing and future maritime surveillance, monitoring, tracking and reporting systems in an integrated maritime information and surveillance network. Five independent sea zones (Atlantic Ocean, Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and North Sea) have now been designated for the introduction of regional systems for cooperation and information transfer. This development is also expected to continue outside the EU area. The European Union is one of the main participants in counter-piracy operations around the Horn of Africa. European countries also contribute to NATO's counter-piracy mission.

Soft power also has its limitations. In recent years, Asian countries have systematically been reinforcing their maritime strength, while the maritime instrument of power in Europe has been on a downward slope. According to Paul Kennedy, the roles of Europe and Asia have thus been completely reversed: *'We have forgotten our past, and the way in which our command of the sea propelled us forward, while Asian countries have taken on board the lessons provided by European history – and put them into action.'*<sup>25</sup> For this reason alone, maritime hard power cannot be ignored.

### Conclusion

The maritime strategy is a continuation of the EU's soft power approach and is primarily focused on sustainable ecological and economic development of the seas and oceans. Although military evaluation is left to the individual nations, it is safe to say that the European Union's first maritime mission to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia has been a successful one. The EU's legal framework would appear to be effective for operations at the lower end of the force spectrum. But the EU cannot (yet) be described as a (military maritime) superpower. Further unification, political and economic, and more intensive military cooperation will need to sustain the development.

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### 3.2 The American cooperative maritime strategy

For decades, certainly after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the United States was the only superpower in the world. And the country is still superior in many areas. The economic index figures are sometimes difficult even to conceive. The GDP of the US, for instance, is 14,260 billion USD. With around 308 million inhabitants, that amounts to 46,000 USD per capita. According to the 2009-2010 World Economic Competitiveness Report, the US economy is in second place in terms of competitiveness. The global financial and economic crisis, originating in the US with the sub-prime mortgages, has also left deep scars in the country's economic landscape. The economy shrank from the end of 2008 until the end of 2009. It received a boost to the tune of 700 billion USD with the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) and this was later supplemented with another 787 billion USD in fiscal stimulation measures, spread over ten years. In contrast to European governments, which are opting for cuts, the US government is opting to keep up expenditure and even increase it in some areas in order to ride out the crisis. In 2011, the US economy was showing signs of a shaky and very slow recovery.

As far as defence spending is concerned, the US is most definitely in first place. Despite the crisis, the US defence budget has remained virtually unaffected up to now. In 2009, the size of the US defence budget was almost equal to the military spending by the rest of the world put together; the US is thus and will continue to



US CARRIER BATTLE GROUP ON THE MOVE (US NAVY PHOTO)

be the world's military superpower. The War on Terror following the attacks of 11 September 2001 pushed defence spending up enormously. The wars have also had an effect in that budgetary discipline in the defence department has been poor in recent years. The defence budget grew officially from 10 billion USD in 1998 to over 708 billion USD in 2010. The 2010 budget still showed a growth of 1.8% in real terms. The basic budget for 2011 amounts to around 548 billion USD, which will be supplemented throughout the year for current operations and wars (for 2011, this is estimated to be at least 163 billion USD, plus a reserve of over 50 billion USD for 'other' military operations).

Even so, this vast amount cannot cover all of America's defence ambitions, which means that the US is also forced to make choices. On submission of the 2011 budget, Defense Secretary Gates expressed these choices as follows: *'The budget and the reviews are also shaped by a bracing dose of realism - realism with regard to risk, realism with regard to resources. We have, in a sober and clear-eyed way, assessed risks, set priorities, made tradeoffs and identified requirements based on possible, real world threats, scenarios, and potential adversaries'*. Critics claim, however, that with the most recent Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), there is still no evidence of hard choices. President Obama has now announced the Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG) entitled Sustaining Global Leadership: Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense (5 January 2012). This DSG was drawn up under budgetary pressure: in ten years,

487 billion USD will need to be cut from an annual budget of around 700 billion USD. This will obviously have implications for the size and deployment of the defence apparatus. The DSG indicates what the US still needs to be capable of within these financial parameters.

### US defence strategy

The US defence strategy is based on the National Security Strategy (May 2010) and the National Defence Strategy (June 2008). In addition, the last Quadrennial Defense Review (February 2010) brings defence ambitions into line with capabilities.

The core theme of the 2010 National Security Strategy (NSS) is the renewal of American leadership in the world. The aim is to pursue global security by building on the sources of strength at home. It is acknowledged that no single country (including the US) can solve global problems on its own, which is why investments have to be made in relationships with partners. The NSS recognizes the fundamental connection between national security, competitiveness, resilience and setting a moral example. American interests can only be protected in an international system (under American leadership) that does justice to the diverging interests of countries and peoples. The American interests are somewhat broadly formulated in the NSS as follows.

- 1 The security of the United States, its citizens, and US allies and partners;
- 2 A strong, innovative, and growing US economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity;
- 3 Respect for universal values at home and around the world; and
- 4 An international order advanced by US leadership that promotes security and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges.

The basis is the American leadership coupled with the strengthening of national capacity: defence, diplomacy, economic, development, homeland security, intelligence, strategic communications and development of the private sector.

The National Defense Strategy (NDS) is based on five objectives for the defense department:

- 1 Defend the homeland;
- 2 Win the 'long war' (against violent extremist movements);
- 3 Promote (international) security;
- 4 Deter conflict;

- 5 Win the nation's wars (against the countries that form the axis of evil and against other rogue states).

In the much more recent QDR, the Defense Strategy has been further adapted to the situation.

Much of the rhetoric surrounding the War on Terror can still be found in the NDS. The last QDR shows that a new government makes little difference to the basic attitude towards defence in American relations, although the words might be different. The QDR states in no uncertain terms that the US is a nation at war, primarily in Afghanistan in a physical sense, but in a broader sense against Al Qaeda. The QDR has two main objectives: to rebalance the capabilities of the armed forces to win today's wars and to reform the Defense Department's institutions and processes to better support the armed forces (the soldier). The second objective is twofold: it refers to vital and affordable equipment for the armed forces and also to justification to the taxpayer.

The starting point for the QDR is that, despite the emergence of new (super) powers such as China and India, the US will remain the strongest world player. To preserve peace and stability, however, more cooperation with allies and partners will be needed. Globalisation has enabled a wide range of world players (state and non-state) to access modern technology, which will provide them with increasing capabilities and a growing influence. In that complex world, the US needs to advance its interests and secure its role as the strongest player. It thus needs armed forces 'with unmatched capabilities and a willingness on the part of the nation to employ them in defense of our interests and the common good'.

The US defence strategy of 2008 has been modified on the basis of the keynotes set out in the QDR. To safeguard American interests, four objectives have been prioritised by weighing up risk against capabilities:

- Prevail in today's wars (Afghanistan, Iraq).
- Prevent and deter conflict.
- Prepare to defeat adversaries and succeed in a wide range of contingencies.
- Preserve and enhance the all-volunteer force.

The outlined priorities serve to guide the development of military capacity needed by the armed forces as well as determining the joint capabilities necessary to be able to conduct the missions, now and in the future. The approach must be

flexible to be able to respond quickly to a changing security environment. In relation to these priorities, the required size of the US military (main elements) is then indicated on the basis of the QDR in the Future Years Defense Program 2011-2015.

The recently announced DSG will have little impact on the specified priorities and the stated missions for the US armed forces will in effect remain unchanged. What were previously strategic and priority objectives have now been formulated as priority missions. Savings will be found in different methods of execution and in more specific centres of gravity. Some examples are:

- Smaller but more flexible (more 'joint').
- Rearranging the forward presence, with the emphasis on the Pacific Ocean and the Middle East.
- Strengthening alliances (especially NATO as the most effective alliance) and partnerships.

An important addendum to the announcement of a smaller – leaner – military is that the US must retain the ability to operate in different conflicts simultaneously. But the threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century require higher levels of flexibility, which means that deployment will depend heavily on the type and scale of the conflict.

### **The American maritime strategy**

The most recent maritime strategy that was committed to print dates back to October 2007. It was compiled jointly by the commanders of the US Navy, US Marine Corps and US Coast Guard and was called 'A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower'.

The maritime strategy is a direct extension of the National Defense Strategy (recently amended in the QDR) and the objectives specified in it. The maritime domain presents special opportunities and characteristics, however. A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower attempts to provide a response to the changing demands imposed on the US Navy, inspired partly by the understanding that preventing wars is as important as winning them. The introduction states that the mission for the US Navy is to deploy maritime striking power in such a way as to protect American interests but at the same time enhance collective security, stability and confidence. At the same time, there is acknowledgement of the friction that exists between the demands

imposed on the peacetime organisation and the need to be able to win wars, including those against violent extremists.

The maritime strategic concept is based on the versatility, flexibility, speed and expeditionary nature of maritime forces. American maritime units will be positioned and deployed worldwide to defend the nation and its citizens against direct attack and to advance American interests all over the world. The maritime power will be deployed to conduct six strategic imperatives and capabilities will need to be geared to the following:

- Limit/contain regional conflicts with sufficient forward-deployed maritime power.
- Deter/prevent war between major powers.
- Win 'our nation's wars'.
- Contribute to homeland defence in depth.
- Reinforce relationships with allies and partners.
- Prevent or contain local crises, ideally before they impact on the global (legal) system.

The capabilities must be sufficiently robust to be able to execute the six strategic imperatives. To put it more definitively in terms of the required capabilities, A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower defines six types of mission of which the US Navy must be capable in order to be able to fulfil its strategic imperatives.

- Forward presence
- Deterrence
- Sea control
- Power projection
- Maritime security
- Humanitarian assistance and disaster response

To maintain the ability to execute all these missions with the 'limited capabilities', the US maritime power will have to be concentrated in areas where there is escalating tension or where friendly nations and allies need support. Forward presence not only means a rapid response to crises. It also supports cooperative alliances and provides earlier indication of local and regional developments. Should a crisis nonetheless arise, the units will have the knowledge of the surroundings and the experience to use it effectively in the necessary combat operations. Forward presence requires freedom of navigation.



MARITIME SECURITY: COMBINED ANTI-DRUGS OPERATIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN BY THE US COAST GUARD

The US, therefore, 'will not permit conditions under which our maritime forces would be impeded of freedom of manoeuvre'.

On the basis of the mission, maritime forces will increasingly be deployed to enforce compliance with legislation and treaties. The US will not tolerate the interruption of global logistic chains. The combating of piracy, terrorism, illegal arms transports and people-smuggling form part of the maritime security tasks.

#### Development of the US Navy

Since the end of the Cold War, the US Navy has been drastically down-sized. Under President Reagan, there was still a 600-ship navy; today, the US Navy has around 285 warships (combatants) to perform its tasks. Nevertheless, America's naval fleet is still by far the largest and strongest in the world. The expected evolution of the US defence budget (virtually 0% growth after 2011, with full inflation adjustment) means that further prioritisation will be needed in future. A study is currently being conducted into the possibility of adjusting the operational ambition in terms of the number of wars that the military need to be able to fight at the same time. Consequently, the US Navy will also be affected by a limitation of capabilities. This is reflected in the announcement that

consideration is being given to the option of stopping new developments or reducing the number of ships. For the US Navy, that could mean, for example, that the DDG 1000 project will be limited to three ships and that programmes for DDG-X and amphibious ship/seabasing will be delayed. The number of aircraft carriers could eventually be reduced from eleven to ten.

The Future Years Defense Program 2011-2015 has matched the ambitions to the financial possibilities and has indicated a range of figures for the different services for the next five years. For the US Navy, these figures are as follows:

- 10 – 11 aircraft carriers
- 84 – 88 large surface ships
- 14 – 28 small surface ships
- 29 – 31 amphibious ships
- 53 – 55 submarines
- 30 – 33 logistics ships
- 17 – 25 command and support ships
- 51 roll-on/roll-off strategic transport ships

This means that the current number of around 285 ships will in effect be reduced further to around 210. It is clear that the DSG will also affect projects and numbers, and the need for greater flexibility is likely to result in a modified capacity requirement. It does not seem likely, however, that there will be any significant change in the structure of the US Navy.

#### UNCLOS

Despite the fact that the US sets great store by cooperative alliances and regards itself as actively responsible on the international stage, it has still not seen fit to ratify UNCLOS III.

After its acceptance by Congress, President Bush asked the Senate in 2007 to approve America's entry into the UNCLOS regime. Members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations had previously voted unanimously for that entry, but it has not yet been put to the vote in the Senate. Since then, the US has complied with the convention voluntarily, so the official entry will make no difference to American policy. Ideological opposition from the conservative side is still blocking the ratification. This opposition sees the ratification of UNCLOS III as a major step towards a world government and they regard the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) as an international court to which



the US could be accountable. Both of these scenarios are anathema to most conservatives. While the United States recognises and respects international law in general terms, it is more reticent where its own direct interests are at stake. One such example is the withdrawal of its intention to ratify participation in the treaty on the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

### Analysis

Until now, the US Navy had the virtually unlimited capability to operate all over the world if required to do so. Today's reality is, however, that it will no longer be able to maintain a dominant global presence. American naval units will have to position themselves strategically in areas with existing or potential tensions which could impact on the security of the United States. As a result, some countries will no longer profit from American security guarantees: free riders will no longer benefit. International consensus and coalitions are essential to establish security at sea and from the sea. The Cooperative Strategy would suggest more work for America's maritime partners, although the US will always try to retain the deciding vote.

Expectations are that the risk of direct conventional confrontations is manageable. The activities of extremists, international terrorist or criminal organisations and corrupt businesses will, however, become more and more entwined with each other. The maritime environment represents an ideal breeding ground for this because proper jurisdiction and surveillance is limited or absent altogether. The maritime environment is thus the Achilles heel of western prosperity and society. The increasing vulnerability of the maritime flank can only be reversed by improving integral security at and from the sea (maritime security operations). The US Navy will focus more effort on that within the possible options. For the US, global and national maritime security are closely linked.

The US Navy has historical links with the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean and has many units stationed there, especially since the Gulf wars. The UN Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) has its headquarters in Bahrain. The Fifth Fleet, which is stationed there, takes part not only in national operations, but also in various maritime coalition operations (CTF-150 against terrorism, CTF-151 against piracy and CTF-152 for maritime security in the Persian Gulf). These combined maritime forces are regarded as a classic example of the kind of cooperative maritime operations that are being advocated.



COOPERATION IN COUNTER-PIRACY OPERATIONS. HNLMS EVERTSEN IN THE FOREGROUND.

### Conclusion

A smaller US Navy is being confronted with emerging maritime countries such as China, India and Russia. Yet the starting point for the maritime strategy is that the US Navy remains superior. Because America's prosperity and security are inextricably linked to those of other countries, the US Navy will be deployed more and more frequently for the protection and support of a peaceful global system.

The US continues to defend the principle of the freedom of the seas, but it will no longer be able to maintain a dominant naval presence all over the world. Benefiting unconditionally from American security guarantees is no longer a given. The Cooperative Strategy would, therefore, suggest more work for countries from which the US Navy will be withdrawing and for its maritime partners.

Although the United States has not ratified UNCLOS and is thus not a treaty partner, it does take an active part. Importantly, members of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) have stated that they will ignore any



THE USNAVCENT HEADQUARTERS IN BAHRAIN

US claims or requests until the US has ratified UNCLOS. Opposition to ratification would thus appear to be counterproductive and not in the best interest of the US. The question that arises here is, therefore, whether the term ‘Cooperative Strategy’ refers to the special cooperation between the Navy, Coastguard and Marines or whether it (also) refers to an international context.

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## 4 Comparative analysis and conclusions

*Though force can protect in emergency, only justice, fairness, consideration and cooperation can finally lead men to the dawn of eternal peace.*

General Dwight David Eisenhower (1890-1969)

### 4.1 The open sea as a Grand Strategy area

A maritime environment is by its very nature different from a land environment. Full control is virtually impossible to achieve. Even the most powerful navy would find it difficult to deny a determined opponent access to the sea. According to Colin S. Gray, Director of the Centre of Strategic Studies in Reading, UK, there has been a constant battle between land and sea (super)powers throughout the history of the world. In historical terms, a superpower generally has superiority either on land (the Romans, Soviet Union) or at sea (the Netherlands, UK, US), and must, in order to achieve global superiority or be able to do so, have a strong enough naval or land force as well as the main force itself to be able to take on the strongest opponent.

The oceans still form a military barrier. Large and well-equipped fleet groups are needed to defeat an opponent with military means in his own environment. After the attacks of 11 September 2001, it became clear to everyone that oceans no longer provide protection against terrorist aggression. Just as after Pearl Harbor, the US now realises that it will have to work with the international community in order to guarantee the nation's security. The interdependence of the power blocs also means that the possibility of a direct confrontation on land between superpowers can no longer be part of the strategy. Entering into a conflict not only means physical damage but also huge economic damage for a country's citizens. The oceans (the maritime environment) do, on the other hand, make it possible to take up a strategic position without direct confrontation, and a

strategic maritime position could be used to support political negotiations. Naval forces could thus influence important events on land. A credible navy is, therefore, indispensable.

Historically speaking, navies are an important indicator of the military might of a superpower. From the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, British and Americans successively brought their superiority to bear by means of their maritime strength. No wonder that the growing strength of Brazil, China and India is attracting the world’s attention. The emergence of new maritime powers can also give rise to more regional rivalry. How the capabilities are going to be used has to be evaluated on the basis of actual conduct. Important indications in that evaluation are the ratification of UNCLOS and a declaration in the national or maritime strategy of the intention to support the international rule of law and to participate in multinational maritime operations.

4.2 Comparison

The comparison of the maritime build-up of the various superpowers seems in historical terms to have started towards the end of the nineteenth century. Because of shifts in economic power, today’s global politics are (again) characterised by strong international competition between old and emerging superpowers jostling for positions of power. Changing relations and interests lead to a changing pattern of cooperation and confrontation between nations in general and also between the power blocs. Even though political appeal – diplomatic relations – is more important today than it was then, the undercurrent is barely any different from the age-old mechanism of world politics: great powers cooperate when their interests coincide and clash when they don’t. Power and its instruments play a vital role in this respect. If you don’t want to be crushed in the power play, you have to be aware of that mechanism. This analysis compares the maritime strength, and its development, of existing and emerging superpowers/blocs.

Table 2 shows a summary of the maritime assets that the existing and emerging superpowers are building up or intend to establish. The first symbol indicates existing capabilities; the second indicates the plans for future development.

	PATROL VESSELS	FRIGATES AND DESTROYERS	AMPHIBIOUS FORCES	SUB-MARINES	CARRIERS	REMARKS
BRAZIL	++	++	++	++	+O	Mainly focused on strengthening sea denial capabilities and maritime presence. Equipment outdated with limited renewal programme. Regionally oriented.
CHINA	++	++	+O	++	-+	Mainly focused on strengthening sea denial capabilities and SLOC protection. Capabilities focused on protection of motherland. Renewal programme runs until 2050.
EU	-O	-O	-+	-O	-+	Focused on economic and ecological control of the sea. Capabilities exist in member states. Only limited coordinated deployment.
INDIA	++	++	++	++	++	Mainly focused on strengthening sea denial capabilities, SLOC protection and maritime presence. Considerable expansion programme. Limited new build.
RUSSIA	++	++	++	++	++	Mainly focused on maintaining sea denial capabilities, building up maritime presence. Renewal focused on revitalisation of building capacity.
US	++	++	++	++	++	Fewer units, but reinforcement of capacity for ballistic missile defence.

(+ = YES; O = NO PRIORITY; - = NONE)  
TABLE 2. COMPARISON OF NAVAL BUILD-UP BY SUPERPOWERS.

Table 3 shows that the rivalry between the superpowers would appear to be manageable. Most superpowers have signed UNCLOS, support international law in their national strategies and take part in operations to keep international trade routes open (e.g. off Somalia). This endorses the belief that all superpowers are aware that mutual prosperity and security are inextricably linked. Nonetheless, the superpowers are uncertain. With the exception of the EU, the emerging powers are all developing maritime means of power to safeguard vital interests. The EU has still a high technological standard for its ships, but compared with the collective European budget – funding 27 armies, 23 air forces and 20 navies – the effective and efficient use and deployment is limited. Now would be the time to advocate a well-integrated European Navy, made of constellations of willing

and able nations. Pooling might very well be the first step towards more efficient use of resources.

The EU amphibious initiative and the EU carrier initiative suggest some coordination in the development and deployment of maritime military means. But it would benefit the EU to also formulate a military maritime strategy for the appropriate use of power to safeguard its interests at sea and to structure the development of maritime military capabilities.

It is also clear that the maritime ambitions of (emerging) maritime powers depend heavily on regional developments. Brazil’s ambitions, for instance, are ‘limited’ because there is little competition in the region. India, on the other hand, has clearly tailored its ambitions to China’s development in the same region.

	UNCLOS RATIFIED	IS INTERNATIONAL LAW SUPPORTED IN OFFICIAL STRATEGY?	CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL MARITIME MISSIONS	(MARITIME) AMBITIONS
BRAZIL	YES	YES	YES	Seat on UN Security Council, protection of EEZ and regional power
CHINA	YES	YES	YES	Keep trade routes open
EU	YES	YES	YES	Safe and clean seas
INDIA	YES	YES	YES	Keep trade routes open, regional power
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	YES	YES	YES	Protection of EEZ
US	NO	YES	YES	Protection of SLOCs, international treaties. Safe seas in cooperation with partners

TABLE 3. COMPARISON OF SUPERPOWERS’ MARITIME STRATEGIES.

4.3 Conclusions

Immediately after the Second World War, there followed a continuous state of stable insecurity, the Cold War. This was so stable that the superpowers, as part of a power bloc, were able to plan the number and quality of their weapon systems almost scientifically. If the *status quo* were to be actively changed by one superpower, that could lead to a nuclear war. The mutual nuclear deterrence prevented this.

After the Cold War, the concept of insecurity took on another dimension. The last twenty years have seen the emergence of a world in which boundaries have become increasingly blurred. In a world in which everything and everybody is becoming increasingly dependent on each other, the greatest threat comes from within. Civil wars, ethnic cleansing, widespread violation of human rights, proliferation of nuclear weapons and serious damage to the environment all pose a threat to international relations and the security of the population. We now live in a world of unstable security. A superpower cannot afford to ignore these dangers, because they could disrupt economic activities, reduce opportunities for the population and bring with them uncertainty and instability. This new world has never offered humanity such wonderful prospects while at the same time engendering more fear of the future than ever before.

International networks which form the basis for the globalisation of our economy and prosperity are vulnerable to extremists and terrorists. Areas in which governments function poorly, if at all, often provide a base of operations and threaten economic development and international relations. Modern economic development is characterised by far-reaching increases in scale, a worldwide capitalism and the spread of a consumer culture. Regulations and policy between nations are synchronised so that trade becomes easier. Countries with large markets (superpowers) do well in this climate and put pressure on smaller countries in negotiations to open up their markets for products made in those large countries.

All superpowers recognise two types of threat to peace and security. On the one hand, those are terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; on the other, it is more a question of internal social threats such as poverty, the environment and the proliferation of small arms. A superpower will want to respond to the former itself, although the international community would prefer a state (superpower) to abide by multilateral agreements to counter such a threat.



Where the threat stems from poverty, the environment or proliferation of small arms, the observance of international law and cooperative agreements is essential for achieving international stability. Multilateral institutions play an important role in this respect.

The analysis clearly shows that existing and emerging superpowers have a preference for specific maritime assets to secure their interests and underline their position. Emerging superpowers have the idea that aircraft carriers and nuclear-powered submarines are a pre-requisite for being regarded as a superpower. Superpowers can see from each other that the same maritime developments by a fellow superpower can pose a threat. This would appear to be the new equilibrium, as the threat from another superpower can be felt, but a direct military maritime confrontation is avoided as much as possible.

Extremists, international criminal organisations and corrupt businesses seek to conduct their activities in the maritime domain because surveillance is limited and jurisdiction is often absent altogether. All superpowers recognise this as a threat to world trade and thus to their own economic development. They contribute to a greater or lesser extent to the protection of global maritime trade. The best example can be seen in the counter-piracy operations off Somalia. Because this is an intersection for global maritime trade, most of the (emerging) superpowers are directly affected. Although a globally ambitious nation, Brazil has the least involvement and is affirming its regional focus by being the only emerging superpower without a presence in Somali waters. This development does emphasise, however, that naval forces in general will play an ever-increasing role in maintaining international maritime security.

Developments in international law will also need to support global maritime security. States, including superpowers, will seek grounding in international treaties such as UNCLOS, but will play a subtle diplomatic game to find the limits for the full protection of their own interests. They will use power, diplomacy and legal instruments alternately to settle disputes to their own advantage. A treaty like UNCLOS has a stabilising effect, even on the only superpower, the US, that has not (yet) ratified it.

The ambitions of the various superpowers and their strategic position will result in an increase in the maritime military activities of (emerging) superpowers, especially in the Indian Ocean and the Arctic region.

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# Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
C4I	Command, control, communications, computers and information
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy (EU)
CHENS	Chiefs of European Navies
CLCS	Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy (EU)
CTF	Combined Task Force
DDG	Destroyer armed with guided missiles
DSG	US Defense Strategic Guidance
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
ESS	European Security Strategy
G20	Group of twenty finance ministers and Central Bank governors
G77	Group of 77
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPV	<i>Gosudarstvennaya Programma Vooruzheniya</i> ('State Program of Armaments', Russian defence investment plan)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEA	International Energy Agency
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITLOS	International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea
LHD	Landing ship Helicopter Dock (multi-purpose amphibious assault ship)
LPD	Landing Platform Dock
MAOC-N	Maritime Analysis and Operation Centre - Narcotics
MINUSTAH	<i>Mission des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en Haïti</i>
NAVCENT	US Naval Forces Central Command
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDS	U.S. National Defense Strategy

NSD	Brazilian National Strategy of Defence
NSS	U.S. National Security Strategy
OPV	Offshore patrol vessel
PLAN	People’s Liberation Army Navy (China)
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
RNLN	Royal Netherlands Navy
SLOC	Sea Line of Communication
SSBN	Nuclear-powered submarine armed with ballistic missiles
SSK	Long-range patrol submarine
SSN	Nuclear-powered attack submarine
TARP	Troubled Asset Relief Program
UN	United Nations
UNASUR	<i>Unión de Naciones Suramericanas</i>
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
US	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar (\$)
WFP	World Food Programme
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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