



ANNEX 3-04 COUNTERSEA OPERATIONS

NAVAL WARFIGHTER PERSPECTIVE

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In order to provide context to [Airmen](#), it is necessary to discuss the Navy warfighting perspective by reviewing key precepts in Navy doctrine, because these precepts will drive maritime component planning.

US naval forces offer a specific capability to shape the maritime domain through the mobility of their platforms and extended presence. Their ability to project timely high-intensity combat power from the sea is critical to meeting joint force commander (JFC) objectives during crisis response as well as during a campaign. In peacetime, the carrier strike group, expeditionary strike group, and surface action group possess the credible military might to project power reinforcing our nation's ability to influence events, deter potential aggressors, promote regional stability and provide the requisite force to influence multinational collective security.

The ability to take the fight to the enemy at a time and place of our choosing is a forte enjoyed by naval forces, and has always been one of our nation's primary objectives in war. The Navy, Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard are the principal organizations that conduct military operations over, on, under and adjacent to the sea, overlying airspace, surface, subsurface, and ocean bottom, as well as the shoreline infrastructures that affect maritime operations. To effectively operate in the maritime domain, the Navy continuously hones its six core capabilities: Forward presence, deterrence, sea control, power projection, maritime security, and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief response (HA/DR).

Forward Presence

US naval forces are forward deployed around the clock. The forward operating posture serves several key functions: it enables familiarity with the operational environment, as well as contributes to an understanding of the capabilities, culture, and behavior patterns of regional actors, and it enables influence. This understanding and influence facilitates the following (from Naval Doctrine Publication [NDP] 1):

- ✦ A more effective response in the event of a crisis.
- ✦ Development of an environment and operational understanding and experience to successfully engage in combat operations.
- ✦ Combating terrorism as far from US shores as possible.
- ✦ Regional stability.
- ✦ A timely response to a crisis.

- ★ Mitigation of the political and diplomatic ramifications of introducing forces into the theater when crises arise.
- ★ Providing the United States with a broad range of options, unfettered by the requirement to obtain host-nation permissions and access.
- ★ Demonstration of commitment to US partners without imposing a lasting footprint ashore.

Deterrence

Deterrence is “the prevention from action by fear of the consequences. Deterrence is a state of mind brought about by the existence of a credible threat of unacceptable counteraction.” (joint publication 1-02, [DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms](#)) US naval forces maintain that core capability and, through employments and capabilities, deter adversaries from aggressive actions on US partners. These naval forces’ capabilities include sea-based nuclear weapons and the forward posturing of credible conventional combat power in key regions, as well as the ability to surge forces tailored to meet emerging crises.

Deterring aggression must be viewed in global, regional, and transnational, terms. Effective deterrence continues to require a comprehensive approach that includes the innovative and judicious application of all elements of national power. The Navy uses forward-based, sea-based, and forward-deployed forces; space-based assets; sea-based strategic ballistic missiles; and nuclear deterrence provided by ballistic missile submarines. (NDP 1)

Sea Control

Throughout history, control of the sea has been a precursor to victory in war. This has been accomplished through sea control and power projection, which complement one another. Sea control allows naval forces to close within striking distance to remove landward threats to access, which in turn enhances freedom of action at sea. Freedom of action at sea enables the projection of forces ashore. Sea-control operations are the employment of naval forces, supported by land, air, and other forces as appropriate, in order to achieve military objectives in vital sea areas. Such operations include destruction of enemy naval forces, suppression of enemy sea commerce, protection of vital sea lanes, and establishment of local military superiority in areas of naval operations. Sea control requires capabilities in all aspects of the maritime domain, space and cyberspace. Sea control is achieved primarily through the demonstrated use or credible threat of force. Sea control requires control of the surface, subsurface, and airspace and relies upon naval forces’ maintaining superior capabilities and capacities in all [sea control operations](#). It is established through naval, joint, or combined operations designed to secure the use of ocean and littoral areas by one’s own forces and to prevent their use by the enemy.

The United States and its allies possess a multifaceted naval force capable of dealing with opposed access and opposed transit scenarios in blue-, green-, and brown-water environments. Operations in blue water require forces capable of remaining on station for extended periods largely unrestricted by the sea state and with logistics capability to sustain these forces indefinitely. Operations in green water stretching seaward require ships, amphibious ships and landing craft, and patrol craft with the stability and agility to operate effectively in surf, in shallows, and the near-shore area of the littorals. Brown-water operations, in general terms, consist of navigable rivers, lakes, bays, and their estuaries (NDP 1).

Power Projection

[Power projection](#) takes the battle to the enemy. It means applying high-intensity, precise, offensive power at a chosen time and place to create the desired effects and achieve JFC objectives. The extent of a nation's power projection capabilities is determined by the range at which it can command and control, deploy, employ, and sustain forces. A number of countries have a local or regional power projection capability, but few have a global capability. The ability to project power increases in importance as access diminishes. US naval forces maintain the ability to globally project flexible, scalable, lethal, and sustainable power. Power projection in and from the maritime domain includes a broad spectrum of offensive military operations to destroy enemy forces or logistic support or to prevent enemy forces from approaching within enemy weapons range of friendly forces. Power projection may be accomplished by amphibious assault operations, attack of targets ashore, or support of sea control operations. (NDP 1) Naval commanders are provided with a full range of power projection options that include employment of long range cruise missiles, Marines conducting high-speed maneuvers across the shore (and inland) aided by naval surface fire support, and a great variety of weapons released from naval strike aircraft (NDP 1).

At the end of the Cold War, the emphasis of maritime warfare changed from "blue water" operations against enemy navies to "brown water" force projection ashore. The naval perspective similarly changed. To this end, **Navy and Marine Corps capabilities and operations are currently used increasingly in combination with Air Force capabilities and operations to create synergistic effects inland.**

In contrast, the growing naval threats in the 21st century, and the possibility of entering into combat with a near-peer adversary, have forced the Navy to readdress its capabilities in the blue water environment. In order to employ in this fashion, Air Force forces should be familiar with and understand the maritime warfare areas and three-dimensional battlespace from which maritime forces develop their operations.

Maritime Security

Naval forces conduct operations throughout the maritime domain and view the oceans not as an obstacle but as the base of operations and maneuver space, which they either

can control for their own use or deny an opponent. Maritime security includes a collection of tasks that are derived from agreed upon international law. Maritime security operations (MSO) are those operations conducted to assist in establishing the conditions for security and protection of sovereignty in the maritime domain. Examples of MSO include missions to counter maritime-related terrorism, weapons proliferation, transnational crime, piracy, environmental destruction, and illegal seaborne immigration.

Maritime security may be divided into *individual* or *collective* categories. *Individual* maritime security operations involve actions taken by a single nation-state to provide its safety and security, consistent with its rights. While the responsibility and capacity of individual nations to secure their territorial waters is the foundation upon which global maritime security is built, unilateral action by a single nation cannot ensure the security of the maritime domain: *Collective* maritime security is action taken by one or more like-minded nation-states to promote safety and security at sea consistent with international law. (NDP 1)

Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Response (HA/DR)

The capabilities that allow naval forces to project combat are also effective at responding to the world's natural disasters. Operating without reliance on ports and airfields ashore and in possession of organic medical support, strategic and tactical lift, logistics support, robust communications capabilities, and premier planning and coordination tools, naval forces are ideally suited for [HA/DR](#), as the vast majority of the world's population lives within a few hundred miles of the seas and oceans.

This core capability is a clear example of goodwill of the people and of the United States and other like-minded nations. It further recognizes that HA/DR activities enable naval forces to build partnerships that serve to increase trust, enhance partner capacities, and provide the opportunity to engage with a larger set of international partners. Finally, it is increasingly recognized that HA/DR conducted by naval forces enables accomplishment of select prevent as well as prevail elements of the US national strategy. The capabilities required to perform this mission are no longer considered less important than those of combat operations. (NDP 1)
