

Keitaro Ushirogata

Global Maritime Military Strategy, 1980–2023

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Japan Maritime Self Defense Force
Yokohama, Japan



ISBN 978-981-96-2398-3 ISBN 978-981-96-2399-0 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-2399-0>

Translation from the Japanese language edition: “Kaiyō senryakuron: Taikoku wa umi de donoyōni tatakaunoka” by Keitaro Ushirogata, © Keitaro Ushirogata 2019. Published by Keiso Shobo. All Rights Reserved.

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Preface

This book is a revised and updated version of the author's doctoral dissertation, which was originally published in Japanese in February 2019, and revised and enlarged between April and September 2023 for publication in English.¹ This study was designed to elucidate the evolution of military strategy in the maritime domain and the military strategic objectives of major countries today, while ensuring methodological validity in accordance with the social sciences. It also seeks to construct a causal inference model to clarify what kind of maritime military strategy other major countries will choose based on the military superiority of the United States in the maritime domain.

Using official documents, related literature, and actual force structures, this book clarifies the evolution of military strategies in the maritime domain for six nations: the United States, United Kingdom, and Japan, which are usually classified as maritime nations or sea powers, and India, Russia, and China, which are considered as exclusively continental states or land powers.

In the field of strategic studies, there are various approaches to the study of specific countries based, for example, on history, social science, and statistics. It is not uncommon to discuss the military balance of two opposing countries. However, to the best of my knowledge, there have been few studies like the one in this book, in which more than three countries are taken up for analysis and in which causal inferences are made regarding the selection of the military strategic objectives of each country. There have also been very few studies that have focused on the maritime domain and conducted comparative analysis of multiple nations.

When a country decides on its strategy, a great many influencing factors are involved. In addition, when a country changes its military strategy, it affects the military strategies of other neighboring countries, which in turn affects the original country again, and so on. As such, there have been few attempts in the literature to

¹ The English title of the original doctoral dissertation (submitted in Japanese) is as follows: *A Comparative Study on the Transition of Military Strategies in the Maritime Domain, 1980–2017: From the Perspective of Area Denial, SLOC Defense/SLOC Interdiction, and Power Projection*, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, Ko No. 175, November 22, 2017 (http://www.grips.ac.jp/jp/dtds3/ushirogata_keitaro/).

incorporate social scientific causal inference in the field of strategic studies. Therefore, I believe that this book is highly original in the sense that it analyzes military strategy and develops a causal inference model through a social scientific approach.

In light of the above, the first chapter of this book is an introduction to the existing academic literature and it outlines the overall research, placing emphasis on proving methodological validity while making extensive use of deterrence theory and the like. For this reason, Chap. 1, and especially the latter half (Sects. 3 and 4), may be difficult for the general reader to understand. However, the theoretical explanation is not essential for understanding the discussions that follow. Therefore, the second half of Chap. 1, if found to be difficult, can be skipped and the reader may continue from Chap. 2.

The first half of Chap. 2 organizes various concepts related to sea power and is useful for understanding the analytical methods used in the case studies. The latter half of the chapter (from Sect. 6 onward), on the other hand, is a summary of the theoretical part, which also requires a certain level of knowledge about deterrence theory, and such. Please note that this chapter includes discussions that are not directly related to the case studies in Chap. 3 onward, as well as many terms and expressions that may be unfamiliar to the reader.

It is important to emphasize here that one of the key assumptions in this book is that each of the countries analyzed is a rational actor. Since rational actors are those who seek to expand their interests while ensuring their own survival, it is assumed that they do not attack other actors without regard for their own fatal destruction. With this as a starting point, Chap. 1 of this book presents ideas such as “hurdles to the use of military force” and the “tyranny of distance” which are based on the assumption that nuclear deterrence will function. In other words, this book is based on the assumption that since humankind has experienced mass destruction and genocide through two world wars and, since 1945, possesses the destructive power of nuclear weapons, which can determine the survival of the human race, it is in the interests of both sides that rational actors avoid forms of conflict such as total war which could destroy the enemy nation as well as possibly one’s own.

It is ironic that modern civilization and rationalism, which have raised the standard of living of mankind, and the science and technology that have developed from them, have also brought about unparalleled destruction in the twentieth century and resulted in the creation of nuclear weapons. This is an undeniable reality. In their book, written during World War II, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno wrote: “The ancient goal of progressive thought, of the Enlightenment in its broadest sense, has been to remove fear from man and to place him in a position of mastery.”² The question that Horkheimer and Adorno asked, while fleeing the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany, was, “Why, instead of entering into a truly human condition, is mankind plunging into a kind of new barbarism?”³ This issue is known in political thought as the paradox of “enlightenment creating both civilization and barbarism.”

² Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente* (Querido Verlag, Amsterdam, 1947), p. 3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

This book assumes that the sovereign states analyzed will avoid the catastrophic use of military force that could lead to the annihilation of both sides and that they will not act outside their national interests. However, since the paradox of “enlightenment, civilization, and barbarism” has not been fundamentally resolved and law and order in the international system are far from rock solid, it can be argued that mass destruction and killing are not inconceivable in the international community. Similarly, it can be argued that sovereign states do not always use military force consistently and rationally. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 (the Ukrainian War) has raised the serious concern of whether humanity will actually use nuclear weapons again. This question is not the central proposition of this study, but it is a very important one that is related to the key assumptions made in the book. While Chap. 1 refers to the “risk of nuclear use in the maritime domain,” the outcome of the war in Ukraine, including the limited use of nuclear weapons, is not clear at this point in time. Ultimately, the book does not provide an answer to the conceptual question, “If we employ weapons of mass destruction among our capabilities as a deterrent, will we always be able to resist using them to kill our opponents?” Perhaps this is the limitation of the empirical research method used in this book.

However, the inability to answer such major questions so closely related to “values” and “norms” does not mean that empirical strategic studies such as this book are meaningless. In postwar Japan, there is not much literature that addresses military strategy head-on or that discusses it with academic objectivity. It is quite natural that many Japanese who experienced the devastation caused by defeat in the Pacific War would feel uncomfortable about the military and would prefer not to think about military affairs if they can avoid it. However, the world after World War II should be discussed in terms of the intervening military confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union known as the “Cold War.” Even since the Cold War—an epoch-making event in world history—the importance of the military as a major element in understanding international society has not decreased. It is, therefore, inappropriate for students of international politics and international relations to turn a blind eye to the military, not to mention the war in Ukraine or the tensions in the Taiwan Strait. Before we simply engage in conceptual discussions and confrontations based on value judgments about right and wrong, good and bad, it is necessary to accumulate empirical analysis and develop theory. Through this book, I hope to provide readers with some insight into how military strategy, particularly in the maritime domain, where logical and empirical discussions have been lacking, has changed in step with transitions in the international community and how much impact the military power of each country has had on the international system.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the GRIPS Center for Policy Research for supporting the publication of the original version of this book. This revised and enlarged edition was translated into English, releasing it beyond the narrow confines of the Japanese language to reach the world. It was my ultimate goal as an academic researcher to translate this book into English and present it to the world. I am truly appreciative of Dr. Robert D. Eldridge for his translation work, Dr.

Jeffrey W. Hornung and Dr. Masashi Okuyama, who supervised the translation, and Kreab, the company which managed this challenging project.

Yokohama, Japan

Ushirogata Keitaro

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About the Author

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Abbreviations

A2/AD	Anti-access/area-denial
AAW	Anti-air warfare
ACW	Anti-carrier warfare
ADC	Air Defense Command
AEF	Air and Space Expeditionary Force
AEW	Airborne early warning
ARG	Amphibious ready group
ASB	Air-Sea Battle
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASROC	Anti-submarine rocket
ASUW	Anti-surface warfare
ASW	Anti-submarine warfare
(B) MD	(Ballistic) missile defense
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
C4ISRT	Command, control, computer, communication, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and targeting * There are several variations of this abbreviation such as C2 (command and control), C3I (command, control, communication and intelligence), C4I or C4ISR
CAP	Combat air patrol
CAS	Close air support
CEC	Cooperative engagement capability
CMEC	China-Myanmar Economic Corridor
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
CS21	“A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower”
CSBA	Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (U.S.)
CSG	Carrier strike group
CTOL	Conventional take-off and landing
CVBG	Aircraft carrier vessel battle group
DCA	Defensive counter-air
DEW	Directed energy weapon (see LaWS)

DII	Defense Innovation Initiative (U.S.)
DMO	Distributed maritime operation
DSG	Defense Strategic Guideline
DV	Dependent variable
EA	Electric attack
EABO	Expeditionary advanced based operation
EM	Electromagnetic
EMCON	Emission control
ESG	Expeditionary strike group
ESSM	Evolved Sea Sparrow ship-to-air missile
EU	European Union
FI	Fighter interceptor
GCCS	Global Command Control System (U.S.)
GDP	Gross domestic products
GIUK Gap	Greenland, Iceland and United Kingdom Gap
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
HA/DR	Humanitarian assistance/disaster relief
IADS	Integrated Air Defense System
ICBM	Intercontinental ballistic missile
IRBM	Intermediate-range ballistic missile
ISR	Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance
IV	Independent variable
JDAM	Joint Direct Attack Munition
LaWS	Laser weapon system (see DEW)
LCAC	Air cushion landing craft
LOCE	Littoral operations under contested environment
MDA	Maritime domain awareness
MIRV	Multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCW	Network centric warfare
NDPG	National Defense Program Guidelines
NPR	Nuclear Posture Review
OTH (radar)	Over the horizon (radar)
PGM	Precision-guided munitions
PKO	Peacekeeping operation
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review (U.S.)
RIMPAC	Rim of the Pacific
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
S/VTOL	Short/vertical take-off and landing
SAC	Strategic Air Command
SAM	Surface to air missile
SDI	Strategic Defense Initiative (U.S.)
SDR	Strategic Defence Review (U.K.)

SDSR	National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review (U.K.)
SLBM	Submarine-launched ballistic missile
SLOC	Sea line of communication
SS	Conventional submarine
SSBN	Nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine/strategic nuclear submarines
SSGN	Nuclear-powered guided missile submarine
SSN	Nuclear-powered attack submarine
STOBAR	Short take-off but arrested recovery
STOVL	Short take-off and vertical landing
S/VTOL	Short/vertical take-off and landing
TAC	Tactical Air Command
UAV	Unmanned aerial vehicles
UN	United Nations
VLS	Vertical launch system
WMD	Weapon(s) of mass destruction
WTO	Warsaw Treaty Organization

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Chapter 1

Theoretical Perspectives on Maritime Strategy



As of 2023, more than 30 years have passed since the end of the Cold War, a turning point in world history. Since the end of the Cold War, the structure of confrontation among sovereign states has changed significantly and security issues in the international community have become more complex and diverse due to factors such as globalization and the rise of non-state actors. In addition, the remarkable development of technology in the field of information and communications has expanded the security domain and established new operational domains such as space, cyber, and cognitive.

Furthermore, we are once again seeing, in the twenty-first century, the emergence of competition among sovereign states, especially among major powers, and much of this competition is mediated through the maritime domain. Japan and its neighboring regions, which are called the Asia-Pacific or Indo-Pacific, present a space where a group of nations are experiencing rapid economic growth through the oceans, and where the great powers are competing across the oceans.

We can therefore understand aspects of international society that concern us by conducting strategic studies that incorporate various factors constituting modern international society, such as multipolarization and science and technology, as well as by carefully analyzing military strategy in the maritime domain and current affairs.

What kind of theory and analytical method should be applied? Is the old classical military strategy theory sufficient? What kind of analytical methods are appropriate? After examining these questions, this book provides a comparative analysis of military strategies in the maritime domain from the end of the Cold War to the present (1980–2023). This approach will help to elucidate the evolution of contemporary military strategies centered on the maritime domain and the military strategic objectives of the major powers, as well as provide clues to understanding the international system. While assuming that nuclear deterrence will function in a multipolar world as it did in the bipolar structure of the Cold War, this study examines the military strategies that have been formed to deal with various situations ranging from low-intensive conflict to high-intensive conventional war. The main object of my research

is to examine trends at the strategic level with regard to the forces that have been formed and their usage in response to various situations ranging from low-intensity conflicts to high-intensity conventional war.

This book analyzes six countries: the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan, which are generally regarded as sea powers, and Russia, China, and India, which are recognized as land powers. Through the analysis of the military strategies of these six countries in the maritime domain, this book will attempt to achieve the following two objectives.

- (1) Along with investigating the basic conceptual arrangement of military strategy in the maritime domain, which has remained unchanged in principle over the past century or so, the aim is to clarify the validity of a new analytical framework consisting of the following three factors (a through c).
 - a. Denial of military threats directed against its territory or areas through its maritime domain, at the theater level, which includes the maritime water from approximately 1,000 to 2,000 km from its coastline (area denial).¹
 - b. To gain military superiority in the open sea or to impede the military superiority of the enemy (sea control).
 - c. Projecting military power from the maritime domain into territory occupied by a nation other than its own to achieve military objectives (power projection).
- (2) The direction of force building will be used to clarify the long-term military strategies of the analyzed countries in the maritime domain, especially as to whether they are trying to increase their own influence in the maritime domain, or whether they are planning to actively exert influence over other countries/regions beyond the maritime domain. In addition, this book will clarify the security and military strategic objectives of the target countries by examining the degree to which they are capable of withstanding high-intensity conflicts.

As shown in the preceding paragraphs, the United States has generally maintained its military superiority in the maritime domain during the period under analysis, and the other five countries have largely determined the direction of their military strategies in the maritime domain based on whether or not they have been willing to accept the military superiority of the United States. Therefore, much of the analytical framework in this book is derived from assessing the relationship between the United States and its allies or potential adversaries.

Area denial, sea control, power projection, or similar concepts used in this book, have traditionally argued the realm of military strategy. In conventional naval strategy, arguments based mainly on sea control and power projection have been common, and theories from a geopolitical perspective, such as sea power implementing sea control and power projection and land power rejecting them by denying territory, are not uncommon. However, there have been no studies that place these three elements in the same category and use them as a clear analytical framework. This book provides a more comprehensive perspective for understanding military strategy in the maritime domain through a comparative analysis based on these three elements.

While national strategy includes various elements such as security, diplomacy, energy, and so on, this book focuses purely on military strategy. The term “military strategy” here refers to the military-related measures and investment directions that a nation implements over a relatively long term in order to achieve its national goals or to maintain the capabilities necessary to secure important national interests. In other words, this work is, in principle, a purely military study and does not analyze assets such as law enforcement agencies, militias, and such like, that are used in low-intensity confrontations and conflicts. This study, moreover, does not encompass maritime security strategies in the broad sense of the term, which would include the development of seabed resources, for example. On the other hand, this book does include air power, land power, and diplomatic elements that could be used in the maritime domain, as well as capacity-building support for neighboring countries, to some extent, and also includes space and cyberspace, which are essential for military operations in the maritime domain, as an incidental part of the operational domain. It discusses, therefore, military strategy that covers a somewhat broader category than pure “naval strategy,” which focuses on the strategy of single military service, the navy.

Note

1. Area denial is the geographic scope of the operational level in contemporary warfare, or the ability to cover an entire theater of war over a wider area. The process of deriving this distance of “approximately 1000 to 2000 km” is described in Chap. 2, but this is not an attempt to define specific distance.

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Chapter 2

What is Meant by “Maritime Strategy”?



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2.1 Transition in the International System and Military Strategy

More than 30 years have passed since the end of the Cold War. However, the significance and use of military power and the military strategies of advanced nations have changed dramatically along with the structure of international society during the period from the end of the Cold War to the present. In the 1980s, at the end of the Cold War, the world consisted of a bipolar structure in which the United States and the Soviet Union had overwhelming military power. At the core of this bipolar structure was a deterrence mechanism centered on strategic nuclear weapons. Nuclear forces such as intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and strategic bombers enabled massive retaliation, and a military balance centered on deterrence by punishment was established in which both sides deterred the other by mutually “anticipating unbearable damage.” This is the so-called doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD).

Deterrence theory was refined as nuclear weapons developed and proliferated, but it did not take long for it to be recognized that “the sole long-term role of nuclear weapons was to deter their use by the enemy.”¹ While nuclear deterrence functioned, high-intensity regional conflicts involving conventional forces did occur, such as the Korean War, Vietnam War, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and thus it is

clear that the value of conventional forces has not been lost. In the 1980s, when the U.S. Navy was considering its strategy against the Soviet Union, its primary focus was to prepare for a global, high-intensity conventional war between East and West based on nuclear deterrence and to build a posture that would enable victory while deterring Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) forces.² At this time, the United Kingdom, an ally of the United States, would support American forces with a certain degree of comprehensive capability, including independent nuclear forces, while Japan complemented U.S. sea control in the Far East and played an important role in area denial, such as air defense and anti-submarine warfare, by utilizing its geographical characteristics to contain Soviet sea and air power. The importance of conventional forces in the function of nuclear deterrence is particularly compelling on land, where massive human casualties can be expected. Although there are many unknowns in each country regarding the process of the tactical use of nuclear weapons in the maritime domain, in general, since the Cold War the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons is very high. This hypothesis is valid for the war in Ukraine at this stage (September 2023). Russian political leaders have repeatedly blackmailed Ukraine and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with threats of “limited use of nuclear weapons,” but when considering retaliation after actual use of nuclear weapons, it clearly has not been easy to decide to actually use them.

Going back to 1989, when the end of the Cold War was declared at the Malta Summit, followed by the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the process of dramatic changes in the international system also brought about major changes in the logic of military power. In the words of Francis Fukuyama, liberal democracy is “the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution” and may well become “the final form of human government.”³ With a certain optimism, his assertion that “liberal democracy was arguably free from such fundamental internal contradictions” was widely accepted in the West as “the victory of liberal democracy.” Since the end of this ideological struggle was seen as bringing “peace dividends,” including a significant reduction in the risk of nuclear war, the main security issues of the early 1990s were disarmament and arms control and, in the European theater, which was at the forefront of the East–West confrontation during the Cold War, the main subject of discussion was the eastward expansion of NATO, or the inclusion of former Warsaw Pact member nations, following the victory of the liberal-democratic states. Russia greatly reduced its military power and influence in the course of its rapid economic impoverishment, while American military power showed overwhelming superiority throughout the world. As a result, the issue of whether to accept U.S. military superiority in the maritime domain or face potential confrontation has had a major impact on the force building of the major powers.

On the other hand, the end of the Cold War did not diminish the importance of military power, nor did the unipolar structure led by the United States deter the outbreak of regional, religious, and ethnic conflicts. As Samuel Huntington noted: “Fault line wars (ethnic conflict and fault line wars between groups from different civilizations) may stop entirely for a period of time, but it rarely ends permanently.”⁴ Shortly after the end of the Cold War, ethnic and religious conflicts that had been suppressed during the Cold War became apparent in many parts of the world. The

Gulf War, Yugoslav civil war, Kosovo conflict, Somali intervention, and many other conflicts occurred, seeming to give persuasiveness to Huntington's argument to the international community.

All of these conflicts have arisen under the unipolar structure of American political and military superiority, and we can generally observe a dominant pattern of military power use in these conflicts. Simply put, this is the active intervention of the United States or NATO, which intervenes aggressively on the premise of sea control, i.e., its own "freedom of use of the seas." For example, in the case of the 1991 Gulf War, the maritime forces of the Coalition of the Willing could assemble off the coast of Baghdad, a position where they could project force without being hampered by Iraqi actions thanks to U.S. sea control, and from there they launched cruise missiles, struck aircraft with precision-guided bombs, and land forces, as previously planned.

2.2 The Three Components of Maritime Military Strategy

During the post-Cold War period there were many cases, such as the abovementioned, where, based on the overwhelming superiority of the U.S. military in sea control, influence was exercised through power projection (political presence, etc.) or where conventional forces were directly used, which can generally be classified as aggressive offensive strategies. In this period, military power construction in the maritime domain of major countries became increasingly oriented toward "expeditionary forces" based on the "freedom of use of the seas" provided by the United States, and priority was given to the demonstration of power projection. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, the probability of a large-scale war among advanced countries was considered very low, and relatively large landing ships, helicopter aircraft carriers, and other large surface vessels with an emphasis on sea-basing functions were planned and built as effective assets for low intensity conflicts and confrontations or non-traditional security areas such as United Nations (UN) Peace Keeping Operations (PKOs).⁵

The vulnerability of these highly visible surface assets becomes a problem if a powerful adversary in a high-intensity conflict attempts area denial by operating submarines, for example. As a result, their ability to maneuver in the area of operations is seriously constrained. At the time, however, the U.S. Navy possessed overwhelming superiority in the maritime domain, and the ability to operate was not considered a major problem. Later, in the twenty-first century, the Global War on Terrorism and stability operations became major security issues. However, because terrorists did not possess the military power to impede the projection of an advanced nation's forces in the maritime domain, nor did they possess on their own the self-contained maritime military power to control the open seas, major powers continued to be able to use their "freedom of maritime operations" with little or no restrictions on the use of their forces as they intended.

This offensive military strategy based on overwhelming maritime dominance has been effective in subduing terrorists and small and medium-sized "rogue states," but it

has exposed problems for the new powers that have emerged since the late 1990s. The “Revolution in Military Affairs” (RMA) and the proliferation of such technologies, especially those related to command-and-control systems, conventional submarines, and cruise missiles, have enabled China’s Anti-Access/Area Denial Strategy (A2/AD Strategy) to develop. Modern area denial is capable of controlling the open seas more than 1000 km from land and the coast. For most of history, the oceans beyond the horizon have been an area where land forces could not interfere, and self-contained blue-water navies, operating on their own without support, fought for sea control. Nowadays, however, various intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets such as satellites, high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft, and unmanned aerial vehicles can immediately detect and track maritime assets in the open seas, and long-range attack aircraft and cruise missiles from the ground or from coastal areas can strike them with precision. In addition, small missile boats, conventional submarines, etc., can easily interfere with “freedom of use of the sea” in coastal areas. This situation is similar to the end of the Cold War in the 1980s when the Soviet Union’s naval and air power grew and the superiority of the U.S. Navy in the maritime domain was threatened. In addition, the modern era, which is more highly networked with the operational tempo becoming faster, is more advanced than the Cold War period, thus making it easier to prevent an opponent’s control of the sea through area denial. To overcome this situation, it has become necessary to enhance long-range precision strike capabilities with equipment systems backed by more advanced technology in order to exert sea control and power projection. As a result, the cost of implementing sea control and power projection is becoming even more expensive relative to area denial.

In other words, in the context of the late Cold War or the contemporary maritime domain, modern military technology can be understood as enabling the exercise of influence over the sea from the land at the theater level. C4ISRT (command, control, computer, communication, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and targeting) networks, such as satellites and early warning assets and tactical data links, enable near-real-time situational awareness at the theater level, which is much broader than the operational area level, and can be instantly shared among many commands and assets.⁶ These networks not only provide a constant situational awareness of the deployment of one’s own forces and friendly forces, but also allow for continuous detection, tracking, and further engagement of opposing naval vessels and aircraft immediately after their departure and takeoff. Therefore, if the side with a certain degree of military superiority relies solely on conventional power projection, it will be difficult to project the required power because the opponent’s area denial will inhibit action before the power projection assets are deployed in the area of operation and military action is taken. In other words, modern area denial strategy can inhibit the power projection of the expeditionary force with a high probability and deny the use of the theater. In addition, area denial consists of relatively inexpensive forces compared to the carrier strike group (CSG), which consists of power projection or sea control, and the expeditionary strike group (ESG), which consists mainly of assault landing ships.

On the other hand, the situation is different outside the advanced C4ISRT network consisting of like early warning systems; in other words, outside the zone of area denial. There, the strategic objective is described by the classical concept of command of the sea (sea control), which is similar to conventional naval warfare, and is based on self-contained maritime operational forces, that is, mainly aircraft carriers or large surface combatants and their on-board aircraft.⁷ However, only the United States has consistently maintained and developed capabilities to withstand high-intensity conventional warfare centered on large carrier strike groups since the end of the Cold War, and as of the early 2020s, the sea control possessed by Japan, the United Kingdom, India, and China in the twenty-first century and beyond will remain geographically limited or capable of responding only to low to moderate intensity warfare.

For more than a century, military strategy in the maritime domain has been discussed in terms of two contrasting schools of thought: Mahan's (Alfred Thayer Mahan), which focuses on maritime superiority, or sea control, and Corbett's (Julian Corbett), which emphasizes the difficulty of command of the sea and operations after sea control is gained, when forces are projected from the sea to land. The two have been discussed in contrast. In reality, however, military strategy in the maritime domain cannot be clearly encompassed based on such dualism. If this dualism of "Mahan or Corbett" is used in the discussion, the most important element for military force, "homeland defense," will be missing. Originally, the superiority or inferiority of military power in the maritime domain was determined by the combination of the three elements of area denial, sea control, and power projection. Generally speaking, the side with superior power has been oriented toward securing sea/air superiority and projecting power against strategic targets on land as a means of securing its own national interests, and this situation has remained somewhat constant from the early twentieth century to the mid-Cold War period. The British and U.S. navies, on the other hand, were more oriented toward sea control and power projection, while Germany in World War II and the Soviet Union until the middle of the Cold War were forced to take the defensive because of their inferiority in sea control, and they mainly used area denial, represented by submarine forces, to prevent their enemies from projecting forces. Thus, since area denial constitutes a critically important military strategic objective of self-defense, it is impossible to discuss military strategy in the maritime domain based on the dualism of sea control and power projection without this element.

Furthermore, even if we discuss the issue within a kind of simple "offensive-defensive" framework, or if we argue that "sea powers use power projection and land powers counter by area denial," we cannot derive an accurate understanding of contemporary military strategy in the maritime domain. For example, Japan has been countering China's recent development of its area denial strategy by increasing its submarine force and surface-to-ship missile forces on islands to improve its own area denial capabilities. In other words, by responding to China's area denial with its own area denial, Japan aims to prevent an opponent from gaining maritime superiority as a "second-best strategy" after abandoning its own efforts to gain maritime superiority.

As a result, the maritime waters in question presents a situation of a “maritime no-man’s-land,” and the protection of forward-deployed bases or power projection assets by exercising area denial is an essential requirement in its military strategy.⁸

The superior side, having secured control of the sea, exerts power projection and thereby attacks the territory and coasts of the opponent. On the other hand, the defending side blocks this through area denial. Such a simple scheme is insufficient, however, to understand military strategy in the maritime domain. At the end of the Cold War, in response to the expansion of the Soviet Union’s area denial capability in the Far East, Japan, which expected the U.S. military to exercise sea control and undertake power projection, improved its area denial in the form of air defense and anti-submarine warfare capabilities in anticipation of U.S. military reinforcements. In light of this recent history, it is appropriate to analyze military strategy in the maritime domain in terms of all three components: sea control, power projection, and area denial, rather than on the dualism of “Mahan vs. Corbett,” “sea power and land power,” and/or “offense and defense” theories.

The three components that I have described so far, i.e., sea control, power projection, and area denial, can be simplified and visualized to some extent as differences in the direction of power. In other words, area denial is the use of force from land or one’s own coastal area toward the open sea to block or eliminate enemy actions coming from the sea at theater level, while power projection is the projection of force from the maritime domain into the land domain of another nation. On the other hand, sea control is aimed at gaining superiority in the open sea and requires the self-contained power to operate independently and self-sufficiently in the maritime domain. Table 2.1 summarizes this discussion.

In addition, sea power plays various roles at each stage of escalation (escalation ladder), from diplomatic and police roles in peacetime or political presence or as an element of nuclear strategy. In this respect, the role of military power in the maritime domain cannot be completely summarized by the dualism found in the arguments of Mahan and Corbett. In the strategic documents of the countries covered in this book, these roles of sea power are not strictly demarcated, but are enumerated in a somewhat intuitive discussion. For example, the *Joint Doctrine Publication 0–10 British Maritime Doctrine*, published by the British Ministry of Defense in 2011, defines the roles of British Maritime Power as: (1) War-fighting, (2) Maritime

Table 2.1 Three components of military strategy in the maritime domain

Elements	Objective	Direction of power
Area denial	Elimination of threats posed to one’s domain through the ocean	Land and coast ⇒ Sea
Sea control	Eliminating enemies at sea and ensuring freedom of action for oneself	Sea ⇒ Sea
Power projection	Exercise of influence over the territory of other countries	Sea⇒Land/Coastal

Source Prepared by the author

Security, and (3) International Engagement, which consists of a variety of missions as shown in Table 2.2.

In the maritime domain, the expectation of various roles for military forces from peacetime to wartime is not unique, but rather common. Indeed, it is a historical fact. As will be explained in detail later, not only the United Kingdom but also the United States and the other four countries analyzed in this study have all been using a wide range of military capabilities in actual operations, from humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) in peacetime, to political presence or as diplomatic tools through exercises, etc., to high-intensity warfare.

When discussing a strategy that is limited to one type of military force, the navy, or “naval strategy,” and if we are speaking of an offensive-oriented navy that focuses on the functions of sea control and power projection in the open sea rather than homeland defense, the traditional dualism of “Mahan or Corbett” may provide some good reference points. However, in practice, many states have made area denial an important strategic objective and most navies possess area denial capabilities. What is more, navies are not the only military forces that use the oceans now as their area of operations. Since air and land forces have a significant influence on the control of the maritime domain, discussing naval strategy alone will lead to a limited understanding of higher-level security and military strategy.

Thus, if we are to attempt a more useful analysis of the role of military power in the complex and varied maritime domain, it is insufficient to use the traditional

Table 2.2 Role of maritime power as indicated in *British Maritime Doctrine*

Role 1 “War-fighting”	Principles shaping the use of military force at sea Sea control, sea denial, fleet-in-being, cover, decisive battle Principles shaping the use of military force to be used from the sea Maritime Manoeuvre and maritime power projection
Role 2 “Maritime Security”	UK mainland and overseas security Maritime trade Responding to crimes committed at sea or across borders Freedom of navigation Military intelligence gathering Humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) Japanese Evacuation Assistance
Role 3 “International Engagement”	Prevention of disputes Deterrence Strategic deterrence/conventional deterrence Reassurance to friendly countries Coercion Containment Presence Strategic intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance Security sector reform and capacity building Maritime stabilization operations

Source: Author’s notes from UK Ministry of Defence, *Joint Doctrine Publication 0–10: British Maritime Doctrine*, 2011, pp. 2–7, 2–8

“Mahan-Corbett,” “sea power-land power,” “offensive-defensive,” or other such simple dualisms; nor is it sufficient to discuss a single military service, the navy. A clearer analysis of the force composition of the country under analysis becomes possible by focusing, instead, on the “direction of power” and classifying it into three components. For example, political presence in peacetime can effectively achieve its political goals by focusing on visible power projection assets that exert influence in other countries’ territories, and it is difficult for stealthy drones or undetectable submarines to convey their presence and intentions to the opponent. Therefore, a typical area denial asset is not suitable for such political purposes. This triadic organization allows for a clear analysis based on force composition, and enables us to answer the question, “What is feasible for the state in question, and what does it intend to do to develop its military capabilities in the maritime domain?”.

2.3 Assumptions and Research Questions

Most of the literature related to military strategy that could be used as a precedent for this book focuses on a specific theater or country or discusses the relative degree of superiority or inferiority of military power between two nations. There are no studies such as the one in this book, which conducts a comparative analysis of military strategies of three or more major countries over a certain period of time, focusing mainly on the perspective of force construction. Neither are there any modeling analytical frameworks using comparative analysis, nor any analyses of the impact of military strategies on the international system. To the best of my knowledge, there is no research providing a comparative analysis included in any of the books cited in this study or in the bibliography.

It is not so long ago that transparency of military strategy became important in order to avoid unnecessary tension in domestic political consensus-making and friction with neighboring countries. It was not until after the end of the Cold War that military strategies of countries other than the United States, such as those of Russia and India, became publicly available. This is also the first time in recent years that comparative studies on military strategy have become possible. There are many other useful studies on deterrence theory, sea power theory, and the military strategies of the six countries analyzed in this book, but there are few comparative analyses of three or more countries based on a single analytical framework, as in this study.

Therefore, clarification of the impact that changes in international society and other conditions from the end of the Cold War to the present day has had on major trends in contemporary military strategy, the military strategic objectives of major countries and their force structures will make a significant contribution to the development of military-strategic theory. Furthermore, clarifying the implications of these changes for the international system, based on military rationality, will contribute to the development of international relations theory. In order to achieve this goal, this book presents an analytical framework of area denial, sea control, and power projection, as well as describing the assumptions for discussion as shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Assumptions for this study

(1) Key actors are rational actors at a certain level
(2) Nuclear deterrence does work in principle even in a multipolar world
(3) Due to the proliferation of advanced military technology, each actor has long-range precise strike capability and advanced C4ISRT networks

Then, one of the objectives of this book is to argue for a relationship between these assumptions and the dependent variable based on the independent variables shown in the next section and the affectors that will be found in the subsequent discussion to influence causal inferences.

By organizing the discussion up to this point, three assumptions can be shown in Table 2.3. Before proceeding with the discussion, it is necessary to clarify the position of this book with regard to (2) “nuclear deterrence in a multipolar world.” It is safe to assume that the use of nuclear weapons at the tactical level is extremely difficult in the land domain, where the risk for mass casualties of noncombatants is high and the possibility of escalation of the use of strategic nuclear weapons is undeniable. However, the tactical use of nuclear weapons in the maritime domain, which is separated from the land domain, and where the possibility of non-combatants being involved is significantly lower than on land, is not only assumed to differ from country to country regarding the process of use, but is unknown to begin with. In general, however, if there is no risk of involving noncombatants and it is difficult to counter an enemy using conventional forces alone, the threshold for non-strategic use of nuclear weapons in the maritime domain can be regarded as relatively low compared to that in the terrestrial domain.

Therefore, it is not appropriate to assert that nuclear deterrence takes effect completely and absolutely under the conditions presented in this book, and the big and critical question of whether nuclear deterrence functions in a multipolar world cannot be strictly answered. However, even if nuclear weapons are used tactically in the maritime domain, if the above thought process is followed, it can be assumed that this would be a case of limited, single use in the maritime domain of operations, where human suffering would be limited and the use of nuclear weapons would be judged to be complete as counterforce. In other words, the use of tactical nuclear weapons in the maritime domain can be considered as a case where they are used because it is judged that escalation to a situation of strategic nuclear exchange (thermonuclear exchange) is unthinkable.⁹ Even if the probability of the tactical use of nuclear weapons in the maritime domain cannot be ruled out, this book assumes the possibility of non-strategic use of nuclear weapons to be extremely low, and even if a case of use were possible, it would be transient and the probability of escalation to a thermonuclear exchange would be extremely low. Therefore, in subsequent discussions, nuclear forces will be eliminated from now on.

Although nuclear deterrence is considered to have functioned effectively under the U.S.-Soviet bipolar structure, it is extremely difficult to verify whether and to what extent nuclear deterrence will function in the post-Cold War era, when multipolarity

is progressing and nuclear capabilities exist. In his 2008 book, Thomas Schelling makes the following comment at the end of the Introduction.¹⁰

But “mutual deterrence” involving the United States and the Soviet Union, was impressively successful. We can hope that Indians and Pakistanis will draw the appropriate lesson. If this book can help to persuade North Koreans, Iranians, or any others who may contemplate or acquire nuclear weapons to think seriously about deterrence, and how it may accomplish more than pure destruction, both they and we may be better for it.

Schelling’s discourse demonstrates the difficulty of presenting concrete measures for strategic stability in the current world and the limitations of military-strategic theory, where one can only hope for the function of deterrence. Therefore, this book does not attempt a rigorous examination of the question of whether nuclear deterrence will work in a multipolar world.

Similarly, Kenneth Waltz and Scott Sagan, in their 2003 book, discuss the increase in the number of nuclear powers. Sagan argued that an increase in the number of nuclear actors would bring instability and harm to the international system and that “more will be worse,” whereas Waltz argued that “if nuclear weapons benefit the aggressor or increase the coerciveness of threats by intimidating states, then the more nuclear weapons proliferate to more actors, the worse it will be for the world. On the other hand, if the proliferation of nuclear weapons facilitates state defense and deterrence, we can expect quite the opposite result,” and while not asserting that nuclear proliferation will necessarily have a positive effect, he reserves assessment of the impact of nuclear proliferation, saying “more may be better.”¹¹ For these reasons, Waltz cites the following points.¹²

- (1) International politics is a system of self-help.
- (2) Nuclear weapons reduce miscalculations regarding the use of military force because of the serious consequences of their actual use.
- (3) Nuclear weapons make it very difficult for a nation to start a war.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence in a multipolar world cannot be empirically explained, as it is not a matter of speculation, since the contemporary international community, which is facing such a situation for the first time, is changing in an ongoing manner, and the outcome of the war in Ukraine is not clear. Therefore, in this book, we will discard nuclear force and proceed with the discussion, and for this purpose, we will assume that nuclear deterrence will function in principle even in a multipolar world. In other words, nuclear forces have a kind of “metaphysical existence” in modern military strategy and have their own reason for existence only in strategic deterrence, and that the possibility of failure of this deterrence is extremely small under the current circumstances. As a result, high-intensity conventional forces are the core of military strategy in terms of deterrence and various specific applications.

The research questions that serve as the starting point for the analysis in this book are summarized in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Research questions for this study

(1) What is the appropriate analytical framework for understanding major country’s military strategy in the maritime domain?
(2) How has the military strategy in the maritime domain changed for each country during the period under analysis? In particular, how does the military superiority of the United States affect other countries?
(3) How can we read the changes in maritime military strategies of major country in terms of their respective policies or force structure?

2.4 Presentation of Expected Variables and Selection of Countries for Analysis

In this section, we select the countries to be analyzed and present the approximate variables that are expected to be identified through the analysis in Chap. 1 and beyond. The purpose of this study is not only to construct a causal inference model, but also to contribute to explaining the usefulness of the analytical frame presented in this study through the construction of a causal inference model. This book attempts to present a causal inference model as simple as possible. The variables used are the following two types¹³:

Independent variable (IV): A variable that influences, or is hypothesized to influence, another variable. The term “explanatory variable” is often used interchangeably with independent variable.

Dependent variable (DV): What the researcher seeks to explain. It is hypothesized to be caused by, or be “dependent” on, one or more independent variables.

In the first place, there is no absolute universal theory in the social sciences, but there has also not been a “general theory” to ensure victory in military strategy theory either. It will likely be extremely difficult to construct one in the future. Naturally, the military strategy of each country, which is the dependent variable, is variable due to changes in preconditions such as the structure of the international system, technological innovation, and independent variables. It is also difficult to formulate a single model that can simply indicate the degree to which changes in a wide variety of preconditions alter military strategies.

In many cases, military strategy cannot be explained in terms of an arrow diagram in causal reasoning, i.e., “A => B” (A causes B). Strategies are composed of extremely complex processes and elements, and a list of elements that can be observed from a third party includes geographical location, industrial strength, economic and trade patterns, resource reserves, population, national educational level, historical background, religion or values, domestic politics, and the personalities of political and military leaders. The factors involved are truly diverse. Therefore, even if we enumerate the various factors related to military strategy, it may be more appropriate to understand them as “interdependent relationships” rather than “causal relationships.”

Colin Gray has argued that “there appears to be a unity to all strategic experience, regardless of period, polity, or technology. The need to use or threaten force for political objectives, the need to behave strategically, is perennial and universal.”¹⁴ In turn, this book is not a “presentation of a general universal theory of strategy,” as Gray explores. Given the changes in historical conditions related to the assumptions, especially the emergence of nuclear weapons, the role of military power after two world wars, and the difficulties of using military power, this book does not aim to establish “universal general principles of military strategy” in view of the magnitude of the changes in the objects that military strategy deals with. It is simply intended to understand the evolution of military strategy in the maritime domain since the end of the Cold War as long as the assumptions are maintained, and to contribute to some useful analysis or to provide a tool for predictions for the near future.

In other words, the analytical framework of military strategy discussed in this book is not intended to construct a general universal theory. On the other hand, it does not claim that causal inferences cannot be established at all. Throughout the period under analysis, U.S. military superiority in the entire maritime domain and its offensive strategy based on power projection with sea control as a premise have remained constant and unchanging. However, the form of U.S. military power in the maritime domain is gradually changing with technological innovations, such as the C4ISR capability, and with the economic and military development of other competing actors. The United States has been working to secure access to the areas of operations described by concepts such as Air-Sea Battle (ASB), Third Offset Strategy, and Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO). This has been made possible by the advanced C4I network and focused investment in long-range precision strikes to project power, control the sea, and maintain an offensive strategy. On the other hand, when compared to the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War or China after 2010, it can be said that the form and situation of relative superiority has changed.

In addition, several scenarios are possible, such as nations that accept the military superiority of the United States and expand their influence while avoiding hostility, or countries that plan to militarily oppose the United States. For each country to be analyzed, it is possible to make limited causal inferences about the military strategy in the maritime domain chosen by those countries to some extent, and to derive, to a certain degree, patterns based on the results of the analysis. If we take the military superiority of the United States as the starting point for the study, we can organize the trends in military strategy over the 40-plus years from 1980, the end of the Cold War, to 2023, the period under analysis, into the following five periods.

- (1) U.S.-Soviet bipolar structure at the end of the Cold War
- (2) Unipolar U.S. structure immediately after the end of the Cold War
- (3) Religious, regional, and ethnic conflicts and the era of commitment to these
- (4) Global War on Terrorism
- (5) Multipolarization and the decline of the relative advantage of the U.S.

Throughout the period from (2) to (4) above, the United States assumed its global military superiority, i.e., control of the world’s oceans, and was able to project power with relative ease. The advanced area denial strategy advanced by the Soviet Union

in (1) was once again made feasible for many countries through the “proliferation of advanced C4ISRT technology” in (5), and as a result, the superiority of the U.S. military was being locally impeded, resulting in a change in the conventional composition. This is illustrated in Table 2.5.

As a result, there has been a change in composition along the simple offensive-defensive dualism, in which the superior side goes on the offensive to sea control and power projection, while the inferior side goes on the defensive for area denial. U.S. military strategy in the maritime domain is one of the subjects of comparative analysis, and it is the most visible and significant factor that changes the military strategies of other countries, and it can be regarded as an independent variable because it can be regarded as generally constant within the period under analysis. Whether a country accepts U.S. military superiority or not, and whether the composition of the two countries is potentially or clearly confrontational or not, are also independent variables, which cause changes in the form of military strategy or strategic objectives of each country as the dependent variable.

In addition, the form and geographic location of the military threat to each of the analyzed countries has a significant impact on military strategy. Therefore, the geographical relationship with the perceived military threat to the state is also considered to be a factor that has a direct impact on the dependent variable.

Through these considerations, this book attempts to construct a causal inference model that is as simple and clear as possible, in addition to presenting an analytical

Table 2.5 Trends in military strategy since the end of the cold war

Time period	Period I end of the Cold War (1980–1989)	Period II Immediately after the end of the Cold War (around 1990)	Phase III Continued regional conflicts (1991–2000)	Phase IV Emergence of non-state actors (2001–2009)	Phase V multipolarization (2010–)
Trend	Soviet Challenge to U.S. Military Dominance in the Maritime Domain	Peace Dividend Arms Control NATO’s Eastward Expansion	Active commitment to religious, regional and ethnic conflicts	War on Terror Stabilization operations	Relative superiority of U.S. forces declines locally
U.S. Military Situation	Sea control and power projection inhibited	Demonstrate aggressive power projection based on the assumption that U.S. forces secure sea control			Sea control and power projection inhibited
Situation regarding forces opposing the U.S.	High degree of area denial impedes by U.S.’ sea control	Forces opposing the United States cannot counter U.S. control of the seas			A high degree of area denial can impede U.S.’ sea control

Source Prepared by the author

framework of area denial, sea control, and power projection. However, it is not a single and universal theory.

Waltz states, “theories are sparse in formulation and beautifully simple...A theory is an instrument used to explain ‘the real world’ and perhaps to make some predictions about it. In using the instrument, all sorts of information, along with a lot of good judgment, is required. Theories don’t predict; people do.”¹⁵ This book is not as good as Waltz’s “beautifully simple” theory, but it does at least provide some reasoning, along with empirical analysis, about the nature of military power and strategic objectives in the maritime domain from the end of the Cold War to the present day, as well as some implications for the future. I am confident that this book will be able to find some implications for the future.

From this perspective, this book aims to build a theory analogous to the “middle-range theory” of Alexander George and Andrew Bennett.¹⁶ George and Bennett, citing Waltz’s theory of structural realism as an example, write, “Highly general and abstract theories, which set aside intervening processes and focus on correlations between the ‘start’ and ‘finish’ of a phenomenon, are too general to make sharp theoretical predictions or to guide theory,” and they clearly distinguish these from “efforts to develop and apply broad-spanning paradigmatic theories such as realism, liberalism, and constructivism.”¹⁷

The main purpose of “medium-range theory” is to “carefully delimit the scope of their findings to each particular subclass of a general phenomenon (“limited generalization”).”¹⁸ Also George and Bennett argue the importance of “each of the many generic problems encountered in the conduct of foreign policy—problems such as deterrence, coercive diplomacy, crisis management, war termination, preventive diplomacy, mediation, conciliation, cooperation, and so on.”¹⁹ This book is no different, and its main purpose is to present the necessary assumptions for understanding military strategy in the contemporary maritime domain, and to present an analytical framework that can contribute to real-world policy under these conditions.

The next section describes the selection process of the states to be analyzed. In order to have “long-range precision-guided weapons or an advanced C4ISRT network,” as stated in Table 2.3, it is essential to have advanced military power in terms of both mass and quantity, as well as the economic power to secure such expensive and advanced military power. Therefore, the analysis here will focus on countries that possess and develop these advanced military capabilities, as well as having the economic, technological, and military power to conduct conventional wars with a certain degree of severity. As such, it is appropriate to select countries for analysis in this book based on the scale of their economies and defense budgets. As shown in Table 2.6, the six countries analyzed are all within the world’s top ten in terms of GDP according to the World Bank’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) statistics for countries around the world in 2014.

Similarly, as shown in Table 2.7, according to the statistics of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the six countries were among the top ten countries in the world in terms of military expenditures in 2014. Because of their large economies and the fact that they devote a certain number of resources to

Table 2.6 Top 20 gross domestic product countries

Rank	Country name	(In millions of U.S. dollars)
1	United States of America	17,419,000
2	China	10,354,832
3	Japan	4,601,461
4	Germany	3,868,291
5	United Kingdom	2,988,893
6	France	2,829,192
7	Brazil	2,416,636
8	Italy	2,141,161
9	India	2,048,517
10	Russia	1,860,598
11	Canada	1,785,387
12	Australia	1,454,675
13	Korea	1,410,383
14	Spain	1,381,342
15	Mexico	1,294,690
16	Indonesia	888,538
17	The Netherlands	879,319
18	Turkey	798,429
19	Saudi Arabia	753,832
20	Switzerland	701,037

Source World Bank, "World Development Indicators database," April 11, 2016, p. 1

military power, all six countries can be regarded as having major power in both the economic and military spheres.

This book then identifies the differences between the military strategies of the six countries, and the causes of these differences. This is a method that Stephen Van Evera describes as "comparing cases that have similar background characteristics but different values of the research variable (the variable whose cause or effect is being explored) with each other in order to explore other differences that exist between them". John Stuart Mill's "Method of Difference most similar systems design," which he describes as a method that "explores other differences that exist between these cases."²⁰

It should be noted that Germany and France are also nations that meet the conditions of both having economic strength and large military expenditures. However, since they and the United Kingdom have developed their military capabilities within the framework of collective defense as NATO members, it is not particularly instructive to look for clear differences in terms of military strategy in the maritime domain even if these three countries are discussed in the same study. Therefore, we will focus on the United Kingdom, which is regarded as a typical maritime nation. (In the

Table 2.7 Top 15 Countries in Military Expenditures

Rank		Country name	Expenditures (in billions of U.S. dollars)	Percentage of total global spending (%)	Military expenditures as % of gross domestic product (%)	
2015	2014				2015	2006
1	1	United States of America	596	36	3.3	3.8
2	2	China	[215]	[13]	[1.9]	[2.0]
3	4	Saudi Arabia	87.2	5.2	13.7	7.8
4	3	Russia	66.4	4.0	5.4	3.5
5	6	United Kingdom	55.5	3.3	2.0	2.2
6	7	India	51.3	3.1	2.3	2.5
7	5	France	50.9	3.0	2.1	2.3
8	9	Japan	40.9	2.4	1.0	1.0
9	8	Germany	39.4	2.4	1.2	1.3
10	10	Korea	36.4	2.2	2.6	2.5
11	11	Brazil	24.6	1.5	1.4	1.5
12	12	Italy	23.8	1.4	1.3	1.7
13	13	Australia	23.6	1.4	1.9	1.8
14	14	United Arab Emirates	[22.8]	[1.4]	[5.7]	[3.2]
15	15	Israel	16.1	1.0	5.4	7.5
Top 15 countries total			1350	81		
Worldwide total			1676	100	2.3	2.3

Note: [] = SIPRI estimates

Source Sam Perlo-Freeman, Aaude Fleurant, Pieter Wezeman, and Ssiemon Wezeman, “Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2015,” *SIPRI Fact Sheet*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, April 2016, p. 2

future, it may be necessary to verify the explanatory relevance of this book through an analysis of French and German maritime strategies.)

Military affairs are often secret and access is restricted not only at the operational, tactical and technical levels, but also at the strategic level. However, the analysis in this book and its citations are from published official documents at the strategic level, previous academic and policy-related scholarship, and other publicly available materials at the tactical and technical levels, ensuring the falsifiable and “observable implications” which are necessary for causal inference. There is no essential problem regarding the validity of the research design.²¹

In accordance with this analytical approach, Chapter 2 clarifies the validity of explaining military strategy in the maritime domain within an analytical framework based on three concepts: sea control, power projection, and area denial, in order

to organize the theory for the case study. Next, I will present a case study based on the concept of “tyranny of distance” that arises when conventional forces are projected, and I will also refer to the problematic nature of the concept of “offense-defense balance (or theory)” which has been generally accepted in conventional military strategy, and present the major findings obtained through theoretical level considerations. Following these discussions, the third and subsequent chapters in Part II will analyze the military strategies in the maritime domain of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan, all of which are regarded as “sea powers,” while the sixth and subsequent chapters in Part III will focus on Russia, China, and India, which are usually regarded as “land powers.” Based on the results obtained for the six countries analyzed, a comparative study of their military strategies in the maritime domain, their strategic objectives, and their capabilities to achieve them will be presented in the conclusion.

Incidentally, there is no strict definition as to whether a nation is a sea power or a land power. For example, many researchers would agree that the United States is a sea power. However, in terms of self-sufficiency in fossil fuels and provision, the United States is less dependent on foreign imports and sea lines of communications than is China. On the other hand, in addition to the deployment of naval power in the open seas, the United States has emphasized forward deployment based on U.S. military bases around the world, and there are many other factors that suggest that it is a sea power in terms of the degree of its influence overseas.

In contrast, China is generally considered as a land power. However, since the end of the twentieth century, China’s rapid economic development has made it dependent on imports from abroad for more than half of its fossil fuel needs, and the percentage is increasing. The majority of these imports (about 78% as of 2011) come from the Middle East and Africa, and about 80% of these imports pass through the Strait of Malacca.²² From this perspective, it is possible to argue that China is now a sea power. Almost all of China’s vital sea lines of communications, including the Strait of Malacca, are under U.S. military influence. Therefore, China is dramatically expanding its military power in the maritime domain in order to counter the military superiority that the United States holds at sea.

The concepts of sea power and land power are used not only in the area of military strategy but also in various fields such as history, political science, and geopolitics. Sometimes the origin of the term is not clear, and it has diverse connotations in each field. Halford Mackinder, in his discussion of the ancient Greek-Persian conflict over control of the Aegean Sea, says that the issue was an “issue joined between sea-power and land-power,” and while he describes Athens as a sea-power and Persia as a land-power, he does not sort out what elements constitutes sea-power and what constitutes land-power.²³

The same is true for Mahan, who is said to have been the first to present the concept of sea power. While stating in his preface to *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660–1783* that “The purpose of this book is to examine the general history of Europe and America, especially in relation to the influence of sea power on the course of European and American history,” he does not in the end provide a clear definition of sea power.²⁴ According to Philip Crowl, “unfortunately, he neglected to

define it to any degree of precision. As the term appears throughout his works, two principal meanings emerge: (1) command of the sea through naval superiority, and (2) that combination of maritime commerce, overseas possessions, and privileged access to foreign markets that produces national ‘wealth and greatness.’”²⁵ As per this explanation, (2) is indeed a broad concept that goes far beyond the scope of military strategy.

While the terms “sea power” and “land power” are used in a variety of fields, they have been used intuitively and vaguely by individual thinkers, thus no strict definitions exist. Therefore, this book tentatively defines sea power as “a state that actively plans to use the maritime domain to achieve its military strategic objectives,” and land power as “a state that does not actively plan to use its maritime domain to achieve its military strategic objectives, and whose main area of military activity is the land domain.”

In the end, not only is it difficult to escape completely from the subjective and intuitive impressions of the authors in the respective literature, but also the assessment of whether a nation is a sea power or a land power is variable, depending on the field under analysis and the historical evolution of the nation. However, despite their ambiguity as concepts, the terms “sea power” and “land power” have been used in various fields to describe specific states and are certainly important in academic fields such as historical studies. Therefore, this book aims to make an academic contribution based on empirical military-strategic analysis, that differentiates itself from mere general impressions of the countries analyzed, or vague definitions of sea power and land power and the contexts in which they have been used in history, economics, and other fields.

Notes

1. Lawrence Freedman, “The First Two Generations of Nuclear Strategists,” in Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy*, Princeton University Press, 1986, p. 738.
2. John Hattendorf and Peter Swartz, eds., “The Maritime Strategy, 1984,” in *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1980s: Selected Documents*, U.S. Naval War College Newport Papers 33, 2008, pp. 48, 53.
3. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, The Free Press, 1992, p. xi.
4. Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon and Schuster, 1996, pp. 247, 291.
5. Examples include Japan’s Ōsumi class Tank Landing Ships, Britain’s Ocean, and Russia’s planned purchase of French-built Mistral class landing craft (delivery was suspended in 2014 due to Russia’s military actions in Ukraine at the time).
6. Near-real time means that the current coordinates, course, speed, etc., of an enemy maritime, underwater, or air target under detection are converted into data and shared among friendly assets at a time rate of a few seconds or less.
7. Regarding “sea control,” in the context of “securing one’s own sanctuary,” as in the Soviet Union’s maritime fortification strategy at the end of the Cold War, sea control should be included in the category of area denial, and “maritime superiority” in the open sea should be included in the category of sea control. The organization of the concept of “sea control” is discussed in this chapter.

8. Jeffrey Kline and Wayne Hughes, Jr, "Between Peace and the Air-Sea Battle: A War at Sea Strategy," *U.S. Naval War College Review*, Vol. 65, No. 4, Autumn 2012, p. 39.
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14. Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 8.
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16. Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, MIT Press, 2005, p.6.
17. Ibid, pp. 7, 64.
18. Ibid, p.64.
19. Ibid, pp.64, 268.
20. Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, Cornell University Press, 1997, p. 23.
21. Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research, New Edition*, Princeton University Press, 2021, p.18.
22. Aaron Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle: The Debate over US Military Strategy in Asia*, Routledge, 2014, p. 106.
23. Halford Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction*, Henry Holt and Company, 1942, p. 35.
24. Alfred T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783*, Little Brown, 1890.
25. According to Crowl, Mahan later recalled in a letter to an acquaintance that "the term 'sea power' he claimed to have invented himself, so he later wrote, 'to compel attention.'" Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton University Press, 1986, pp. 450–451.

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Chapter 3

Components of Maritime Military Strategy and an Analytical Framework



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In Chap. 1, this book stated that nuclear deterrence has functioned in principle since the Cold War era and that the core of contemporary military strategy lies in high-intensity conventional war. Considering the possibility of escalation to the nuclear level, the probability of a high-intensity conventional war, especially between major powers, is extremely low, but this is not because the need for military power capable of responding to a high-intensity war has decreased in contemporary military strategy. The deterrence of conventional warfare has become the focus of military strategy due to the function of nuclear deterrence and the rising hurdles in the use of military

force, and the degree to which countries possess forces capable of withstanding high-intensity conventional warfare has a significant impact on the perception of national power in international relations. Therefore, force composition with high-intensity conventional warfare in mind is not limited to superiority or inferiority in conventional warfare, but also has a significant impact on low-intensity confrontations and conflicts, as well as on the operation of military power in peacetime statecraft.

This chapter presents an analytical framework based on the three concepts of area denial, sea control, and power projection, and discusses their validity as tools to examine military strategy for high-intensity conventional warfare in the maritime domain. For this purpose, first, the analytical framework is presented, and then the main naval strategies related to conventional military strategies in the maritime domain (hereinafter collectively referred to as the “sea power argument”) are examined and their problems discussed. After that, this book will introduce related issues such as “deterrence by conventional forces,” “hurdles to the use of military power,” “tyranny of distance,” and “criticism of the offensive-defensive dualism” based on the assumptions made, in order to clarify the validity of the analytical framework of this book. Major findings obtained through the theoretical level discussions in Chap. 1 and this chapter are then presented.

3.1 Conventional Theories of Sea Power and Their Problems

Few strategists have discussed sea power, and most of them have extended, in principle, the arguments of Mahan and Corbett in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The following is Elinor Sloan’s assessment of those who have discussed sea power in the post-Cold War era.¹

A handful scholars, analysts and practitioners, including those who drafted US Navy strategies, are associated with post-Cold War strategic thought on seapower. The ideas have helped modernize, elaborate and push forward the limits of those of history’s best-known seapower strategists, Alfred Thayer Mahan and Sir Julian Stafford Corbett. Leaning variously toward one or the other perspective—but always incorporating a degree of both—post-cold War strategic thinking in the maritime dimension has done much to elaborate the role of seapower in a nation’s security

Military strategy in the maritime domain has often been discussed in terms of so-called naval strategy, which concerns the use of a single type of military force, the navy. This is because, with geographical exceptions such as limited coastal areas or narrow straits, surface forces have for the most part been incapable of attacking ocean-going vessels since the beginning of history, and thus no land force could be committed to the maritime domain in the first place.² Around World War II, long-range bombing by aircraft became possible, and then long-range missiles appeared but, until then, the range of any big guns and weapons was only a few dozen kilometers at most, making it physically impossible to interfere with enemy vessels at sea. Conversely, from the standpoint of ships at sea, for most of history, their targets were

enemy ships or merchant vessels also at sea. As Mahan noted, citing the Battle of Port Arthur in the Russo-Japanese War, “ships, the remaining means of attack, are at a recognized disadvantage contending against forts.”³ Firm fortifications on land could not, in principle, be the targets of attack due to the vulnerability of ships at sea.

As a result, the military strategies of the maritime and land domains have generally developed separately since their starting point and, with a few exceptions, have never been closely related. Thus, Mahan’s philosophy focused on the protection of sea lines of communications between the homeland and the colonies in peacetime, and on destroying enemy fleets in wartime, with the primary objective of dominating the seas, or sea control. Corbett, on the other hand, criticized Mahan’s argument, saying, “you cannot conquer sea because it is not susceptible of ownership.”⁴ He also emphasized the proposition of “methods of exercising command,” that is, how to project power from the sea to shore, including the landing operations of expeditionary forces.⁵ As a result, the traditional theories of sea power have tended to end up in a dualistic discussion of whether it is important to “pursue sea control within the maritime domain,” as Mahan has suggested, or to “project power from the sea to shore” as Corbett advocated. Even today, when discussing a particular sea power, it is often argued from the perspective of “Is it Mahan or Corbett?” James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara of the U.S. Naval War College, for example, in their article on Chinese naval strategy in the twenty-first century, argue that “Alfred Thayer Mahan’s writings and theories on sea power furnish an indispensable framework for understanding China’s emerging maritime strategy.”⁶

The background of this dualistic view of sea power as mainly sea control and power projection is that most theories of sea power, including Mahan and Corbett’s, have focused on the history of the United Kingdom and the United States. Since the end of the twentieth century, the two countries have not really had to experience continuous and imminent threats from other powers against their territories through the maritime domain, and there has been little need to allocate resources to their own area denial capabilities, which are closely related to the defense of the mainland.

In addition, since World War II, the United States has maintained military superiority in the oceans, and as a result of “the dominant influence of sea power argument” based on the Anglo-American experience, another case regarding the use of military power mainly in the maritime domain, namely “the orientation of power from the surface and coastal areas to the oceans,” has not really been recognized as a sea power argument. However, area denial is the most essential element of military power, which originally comes down to “defense of one’s own territory.” Without fully taking this into consideration, most theories of sea power have been limited to explaining the strategy of a single type of military force or the role of the navy, mainly focusing on what the navy should do. In this respect, the conventional theory of sea power has not allowed for a comprehensive discussion of military strategy in the maritime domain.

Technological advances in the twentieth century, namely the development of aircraft and advances in firearms and ammunition that have extended their range and enhanced their destructive power, have made it possible for military strategies in the maritime and surface domains to influence each other. Attack aircraft launched

from aircraft carriers or cruise missiles launched from surface vessels have a radius of action that far exceeds that of artillery and can strike inland areas. Conversely, attack aircraft launched from land-based air bases or long-range cruise missiles have the capability to directly strike enemy ships far beyond the horizon. Thus, since the middle of the Cold War period, it has been possible, in principle, for land forces to strike directly at maritime forces in almost any oceanic region.

The augmentation of long-range precision strike capacities has been significantly advanced by the development of reconnaissance and detection assets, including radar, high-altitude surveillance aircraft, satellites, and unmanned aerial vehicles. Concurrently, the evolution of command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeting (C4ISR) capabilities has facilitated the precise dissemination and exchange of information. John Lewis Gaddis states that nuclear deterrence has not always functioned with the destructive power of nuclear weapons as the sole mechanism. He argues that nuclear deterrence is the result not only of the weapons themselves, but also of the role played by technology that allows them to be transported anywhere on the planet, which reduces the risk of surprise attack, and the ability to know much more about an adversary's capabilities than in the past, which has provided the necessary self-regulation for the deterrence function. In other words, nuclear deterrence functioned effectively only after the "reconnaissance revolution," in which delivery means such as long-range bombers and missiles, and high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft and satellites made it possible to accurately identify strategic targets such as nuclear missile silos, command and communications facilities, and important factories. Gaddis considers this reconnaissance revolution as the first time that a military system has been able to function effectively. He describes this reconnaissance revolution as follows⁷:

Now, it would be foolish to argue that Americans and Russians have become any more skillful than they ever were at discerning the other's intentions: clearly the United States invasion of Grenada surprised Moscow as much as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan surprised Washington. The capacity of each nation to behave in ways that seem perfectly logical to it but quite unfathomable to the other remains about what it has been throughout the entire Cold War. But both sides are able—and indeed have been able for at least two decades to evaluate each other's capabilities to a degree that is totally unprecedented in the history of relations between great powers

As a result, Gaddis argues, "the resulting intelligence does not rule out altogether the possibility of surprise attack, but it does render it far less likely, at least as far as the super-powers are concerned."⁸ Historical analysis reveals that technological innovation has frequently precipitated transformative shifts in military strategy. This phenomenon, termed the "Revolution in Military Affairs" (RMA), encapsulates the manner in which seminal military technologies engender substantive alterations within the strategic environment. Andrew Krepinevich argues that there have been ten military revolutions since the Hundred Years' War in the fourteenth century, when developments in infantry combat drove out heavy cavalry, until the birth of nuclear weapons in the mid-twentieth century. He argues that the eleventh revolution is the present era and that "it appears certain that it will involve great increases in the ability of military organizations to detect, identify, track, and engage with a high degree of

precision and lethality far more targets, over a far greater area, in a far shorter period of time, than was possible in the Cold War era.”⁹

As a result of many of the advanced military technologies, such as the C4I system, which had been held exclusively by the U.S. and Soviet powers during the Cold War, being shared with other countries after the Cold War, many nations have modernized their conventional forces, and in conjunction with these modernizations, land forces are now able to gather information on maritime forces at sea with previously unimaginable accuracy, and search, capture, track, and attack them. In other words, since the mid- twentieth century, an operational environment has emerged in which surface forces and maritime forces, which until then had little opportunity to interfere with each other, are closely intertwined. Consequently, a thorough discourse on modern military strategy within the maritime realm necessitates the consideration of three distinct analytical paradigms: the traditional “power projection from the ground and its coastal areas to the sea” (area denial) in addition to the conventional “maritime exclusive concept” (sea control) and “power projection from the sea to the shore” (power projection).

With relevance to this issue, there are some suitable cases which have occurred recently. Picking up a few of them, the first is the Houthi forces’ military action, ballistic/cruise missiles attack in the Red Sea. Houthi is a non-state actor and has introduced several long-range missile systems, but does not possess sophisticated C4ISRT capability. Then, Houthi sometimes succeeds to some degree in attacking merchant tankers, but it is quite difficult to strike U.S. and coalition warships in 2024. On the other hand, Ukraine has also employed land-based sea drones and air-launched Storm Shadow cruise missiles to attrit Russia’s Black Sea Fleet, and succeeded in sinking *Slava* class missile cruiser, *Moskva* in 2022. Of course, Ukraine does not possess enough advanced C4ISRT tools, but it is estimated that the U.S. and some European countries which support Ukraine shared information about Moskva’s geographic position, course, speed and so on.

See Table 3.1 which is a restatement of the analytical framework presented in Chap. 1.

In general, after World War II, the dominance of the world’s oceans shifted relatively peacefully from the United Kingdom, in principle a Cold War ally, to the United States. The naval and air power possessed by the Soviet Union in the early Cold War

Table 3.1 Three components of military strategy in the maritime domain (Table 2.1 republished)

Elements	Objective	Direction of power
Area denial	Elimination of threats posed to one’s area by using the sea	Land/Coastal ⇒ Sea
Sea control	Eliminating enemies at sea and ensuring freedom of action for oneself	Sea ⇒ Sea
Power projection	Exercise of influence over the territory of other countries	Sea⇒Land/Coastal

Source Prepared by the author

was not capable of going beyond its own coastal defenses to the open sea and was not at the level that would allow it to compete with the United States in the maritime domain. In addition, it was unlikely that the United States would be attacked on a large-scale by another country due to the geographical distances involved, and there was little need to develop its own area denial capability. Therefore, until the middle of the Cold War era, when the Soviet navy greatly developed its military capabilities in the maritime domain and was able to effectively promote area denial vis-à-vis the United States, military strategy in the maritime domain generally did not pose problems in the context of “sea control” or “power projection” in conventional sea power argument.

However, around 1980, this situation changed, and in the process of developing a “maritime bastion strategy” particularly in the Sea of Okhotsk in the Far East theater, the need arose for analysis within the three analytical frameworks of area denial, sea control, and power projection. The tripartite relationship among Japan, the United States, and the People’s Republic of China, which has demonstrated conspicuous maritime expansion since circa 2010, may be conceptualized within the strategic frameworks of area denial, sea control, and power projection. This is analogous to the strategic dynamics that characterized the interactions between Japan, the United States, and the Soviet Union during the terminal phase of the Cold War.

This analytical framework attempts, as well, to classify military power in the maritime domain generally according to the direction of its power and the purpose of its use in a contingency. Conventional theories of sea power have two major tendencies. The first, originating in the classical theory of Mahan and Corbett, is a discussion of the degree of maritime dominance, that is, the extent to which a particular state controls the oceans, with the pattern of explaining situations such as “sea control” or “sea denial” according to the degree of control. The other pattern is to enumerate the purposes for which sea power is used in terms of diplomatic and police functions in peacetime and purely military functions in a wartime.

3.2 Derivation Process of the Analytical Framework (1): the Far East Theater in the Late Cold War

In 1979, the Soviet Union deployed its military forces in support of the socialist government established in Afghanistan, and the conflict between the Eastern and Western camps intensified again, leading to the so-called New Cold War. By this time, the Soviet Navy had operationalized submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) and the strategic submarines (SSBNs) that operated them. Compared to inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) stored in fixed silos on the surface, strategic submarines, which operate covertly undersea and are highly mobile, are extremely important as a “second strike capability” to ensure nuclear deterrence because of their survivability and endurance. As a result, the Soviet navy’s position changed from a supporting role for land forces in coastal defense to that of a strategic

military force. According to Soviet navy Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, “The uniqueness of the navy lies in its superior mobility and its ability to form powerful battle formations by stealth and concentration, taking the enemy by surprise.”¹⁰

In other words, the Soviet navy’s strategic nuclear submarines were initially expected to survive the first strike by the United States and to deliver a credible counterattack, which would ensure deterrence by punishment. The second-strike capability, consisting of SSBNs and SLBMs, was considered the most important asset for maintaining strategic stability between the two countries. According to Admiral Gorshkov, “By the will of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the policy of building a maritime fleet was adopted in our country. The core of this fleet is nuclear submarines for various missions.”¹¹

In order to secure strategic patrol areas for its strategic nuclear submarines, the Soviet navy emphasized peacetime control of the North Sea and Barents Sea in the European theater and the Sea of Okhotsk in the Far East theater, and it was necessary to protect its strategic nuclear submarines from the threat of NATO’s sea and air power, mainly the superior U.S. Navy. For this reason, the Soviet navy continuously strengthened the North Sea Fleet and the Pacific Fleet out of its four fleets. The escort force for the strategic submarines consisted mainly of attack submarines (SSN) and long-range attack aircraft and surface vessels, along with the long-range cruise missiles with which they were equipped. In general, the mission of large surface vessels was to protect the country’s sea lines of communications in the open sea and to destroy the enemy’s sea power in a contingency, in other words, sea control. However, the Soviet navy tended to operate surface combatant vessels as a component asset of area denial, as seen in Gorshkov’s explanation, “support by aircraft and surface vessels for submarine operations.”¹²

Therefore, the main mission of the Soviet navy as a strategic military force was to protect strategic nuclear submarines and to prevent the entry of U.S. naval forces into their area of operations, namely, “sea-denial.”¹³ This is in principle synonymous with area denial as defined in this book. The main assets to carry out sea (area) denial are “nuclear submarines, surface vessels, missile-carrying and ASW naval aviation, naval infantry and coastal missile-artillery troops.”¹⁴ While not generally known, the Soviet Navy had surpassed the U.S. Navy in numbers of non-carrier ships by the late 1970s, and was also operationalizing powerful air assets such as supersonic long-range bombers like the Tu-22 Backfire, and its area denial capability could be considered to have reached a level that could considerably impede the operation of U.S. forces (Fig. 3.1).¹⁵

The Soviet Union’s military strategy in the Far Eastern theater during the late stage of the Cold War focused on the maritime domain, which was called the “maritime bastion strategy,” with, of course, bastion meaning “fortress,” because it placed the highest priority on preserving the operational area of strategic nuclear submarines.¹⁶ Securing the ability to exploit this bastion in the event of a contingency became a high-priority strategic objective for the United States and other Western nations. In the early 1980s, the U.S. Navy adopted its *Maritime Strategy*, which focused not only on the Soviet Union’s control of strategically important waters, but also on how to overcome the stubborn area denial it exercised against the military forces of the

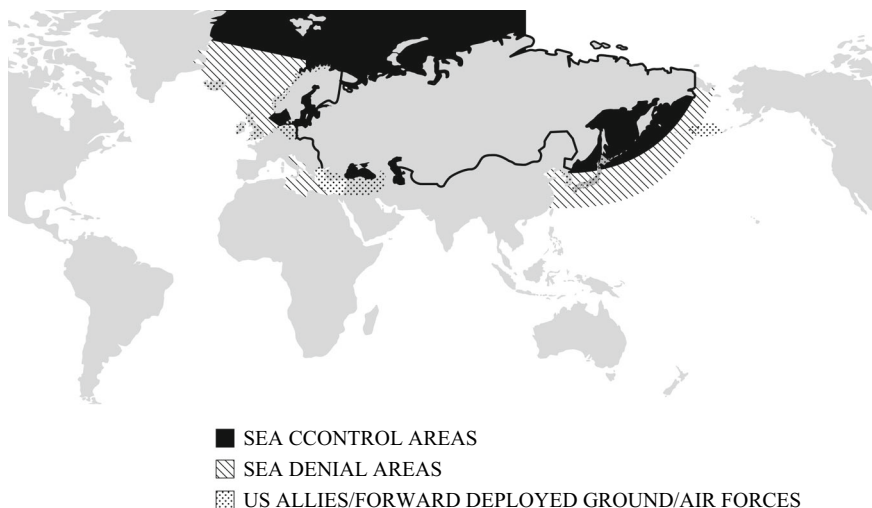


Fig. 3.1 Soviet union's area denial in the late cold war. *Source* John Hattendorf and Peter Swartz, eds., "The Maritime Strategy, 1984," in *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1980s: Selected Documents* (U.S. Naval War College Newport Papers 33, 2008, p. 61)

United States and its allies in the surrounding waters. The map in Fig. 3.1 shows the geographical perception of the Soviet Union's maritime denial capability in the *Maritime Strategy 1984*. At the time, the U.S. Navy recognized that the Soviet Union had achieved "sea control" over its surrounding waters and could conduct sea denial over an area of approximately 2000 km around the outer edge of its sea control area.

The U.S.' *Maritime Strategy* indicates the exclusive use of geographically and climatically closed sea areas such as the Sea of Okhotsk, the North Sea, the Barents Sea, or the Arctic Ocean. This concept bears a substantial analogy to the terrestrial occupation of a designated area; it pertains to a scenario wherein a specific maritime region is controlled with a force surpassing that deployed for the negation of naval power at the maritime perimeter. Thus, it differs in meaning from the "sea control" often used in other theories of sea power in the context of the dominance of a nation in the open sea and "freedom of navigation" for maritime commerce, marine resource exploitation, etc. As Chap. 6 will show, Soviet military strategy in the maritime domain focused on how to deny superior U.S. naval forces the ability to advance into the vicinity of its own territory. Consequently, although the traditional literature might categorize the Soviet maritime bastion strategy's occupation of enclosed seas as "sea control," within the analytical framework presented in this text, it does not constitute sea control per se, but rather falls within the category of area denial.

In order to secure such a vast swath of area denial areas in the European theater, the Soviet navy would prevent NATO naval forces from penetrating beyond the area bounded by Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom (the GIUK Gap), while Soviet submarines would break through the GIUK Gap and block NATO's maritime traffic in the open waters of the Atlantic Ocean (Fig. 3.2).¹⁷

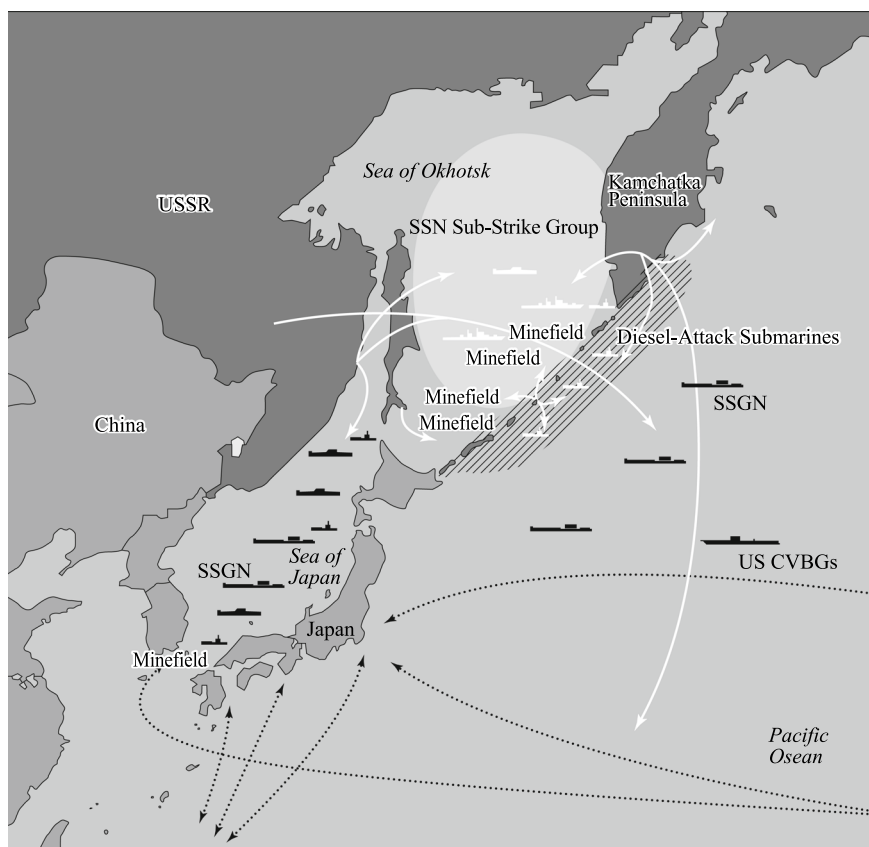


Fig. 3.2 Soviet union's maritime bastion strategy. Source U.S. Department of Defense, *Soviet Military Power: Prospect for Change*, 1989, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989, p. 116

On the other hand, in the Far Eastern theater, Soviet naval and air forces were expected to deploy over a wider area from the Kamchatka Peninsula to the Kuril Islands archipelago in a contingency to prevent U.S. naval forces from entering the Sea of Okhotsk. Figure 3.2 shows an image of U.S.-Soviet operations and the deployment of U.S. and Soviet forces in the Far East theater at the end of the Cold War.

This map shows the deployment of Soviet submarines from submarine bases on the Kamchatka Peninsula to the western Pacific Ocean, long-range bombers from the Soviet interior, and surface warships from Vladivostok in the Sea of Japan and south of the Sea of Okhotsk. In addition, mines were laid in the waters around the Kuril Islands archipelago and Tsushima Island and were poised to deny entry to the U.S. Navy Carrier Vessel Battle Group (CVBG) and other naval vessels.

At the end of the 1970s, the United States was considered to have relatively reduced its military presence, reflecting the pessimistic mood in the country following the

end of the Vietnam War, and the so-called “Nixon Doctrine” which declared that the security of Asian allies should be the primary responsibility of each nation. In order to deal with the Soviet Union’s increased military power and the relative decline of the U.S. military presence, the defense budgets of NATO member countries were to be expanded in the European theater and, in the Far East, Japan, which had rapidly developed economically, was expected to shoulder its fair share of the burden. The form of role sharing between the United States and Japan was based on what is called the “shield and sword” concept, in which the United States was expected to operate offensive forces, while Japan would limit itself to defensive strength. The National Defense Program Guideline (NDPG, known at the time as the National Defense Program Outline), formulated in 1976, expected the United States to provide extended deterrence centered on nuclear forces.¹⁸ In addition, the United States was expected to provide not only nuclear forces, but also to secure sea lines of communication (SLOCs) in the distant seas away from Japan and to be responsible for offensive operations (i.e., striking Soviet bases by projecting forces such as the U.S. 7th Fleet Carrier Battle Group, preventing the fortification of the Sea of Okhotsk, and attacking strategic nuclear submarines).¹⁹ Meanwhile, Japan planned to introduce advanced equipment such as air defense fighters (F-15 J), patrol aircraft (P-3C), and destroyers equipped with the Aegis combat system in the late 1980s, with a view to being in charge of air defense and anti-submarine operations in the open seas surrounding Japan.²⁰

Through the Japan-U.S. defense role-sharing talks, the policy that Japan would come to promote is generally called “sea lane defense.” During the administration of Suzuki Zenkō, the concept became known as “1000 nautical mile sea lane defense” by which Japan would be responsible for the “defense of the maritime area of several hundred nautical miles around the Japanese mainland and SLOC defense of 1000 nautical miles.” However, it was not realistic for Tokyo to be able to eliminate Soviet Pacific forces by itself in such a vast maritime domain, and in reality, the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), other than the role of the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) in supplementing sea control by the United States through offshore air defense and wide-area anti-submarine warfare capabilities, were not able to do so. Moreover, in the case of a contingency, the SDF, as part of an area denial strategy against the Soviet Union in the Sea of Okhotsk, would help secure a place for U.S. military reinforcements to subsequently project its forces to prevent advances by the Soviet Union. Based on this thinking, the MSDF emphasized interdiction of Soviet surface vessels and submarines in the Sōya, Tsugaru, and Tsushima straits, while the Air Self-Defense Force’s main mission was air defense operations against Soviet aircraft entering the Pacific via the airspace around Japan. The Ground Self-Defense Forces shifted from the “inland war of attrition” of drawing the Soviet land forces deep into the interior and bringing them into a protracted war, to a “Northern forward defense” strategy, that is, protection of Sōya and Tsugaru Straits and northern Hokkaidō, and waterfront defense by introducing surface-to-ship missile units.²¹ As shown in Fig. 3.3, Hokkaidō, Sōya, and the Tsugaru Straits were recognized by Tokyo as key points of the “internal defense zone” in the Soviet maritime bastion strategy.

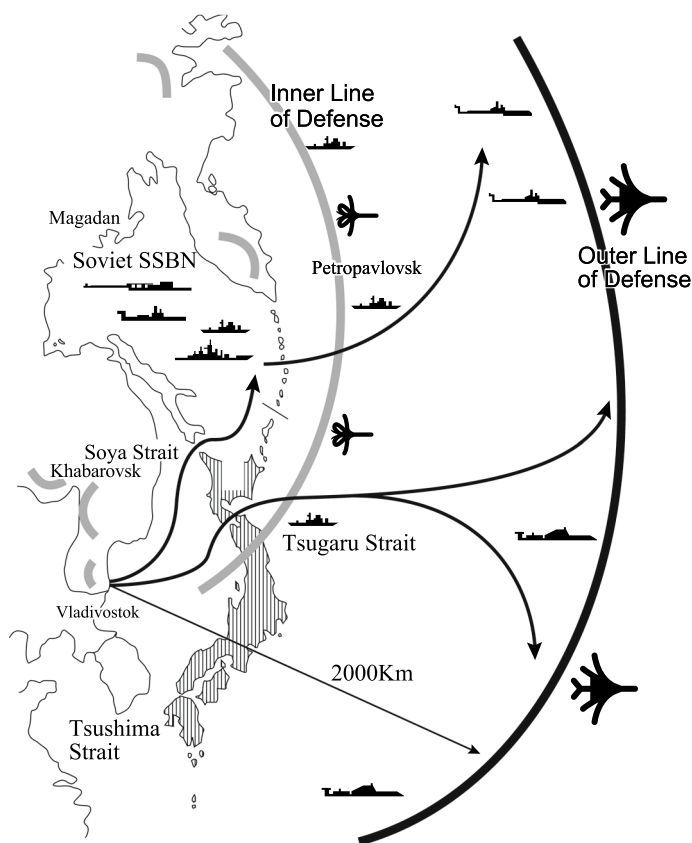


Fig. 3.3 Japanese perceptions of the Soviet Union's maritime bastion strategy. *Source* Shigeki Nishimura, "Rikujō Jieitai no Yakuwari no Henka to Shinbōeisenryaku no Teigen (The Changing Role of the Ground Self-Defense Force and Proposals for a New Defense Strategy)," *Shinbōei Ronshū* (New Defense Review), Vol. 26, No. 2, 1998, p. 4

At the time, Japanese and U.S. defense officials were concerned about the difficulty of reinforcements by the U.S. military, despite the fact that offensive operations by U.S. carrier battle groups were indispensable for the defense of Japan. In essence, it was acknowledged that U.S. forces, including carrier battle groups, might need to temporarily withdraw from the threat zone if Soviet sea-air forces were deployed in high density.²² A large part of the ability of the U.S. military to project its forces depended on Japan's ability in the early stages of a war with the Soviet Union to eliminate Soviet sea-air forces from its territory and control the surrounding maritime waters.

This division of roles between Japan and the United States is based on Japan's strategic defense posture of "exclusive defense oriented," which is the principle of Japan's security and defense policy and is based primarily on political factors. On the other hand, from the viewpoint of military strategy, the division of roles can

be understood as a construct of “Soviet area denial” in opposition to “U.S. sea control and power projection,” and “Japan’s area denial to be executed to secure a base to permit U.S. sea control and power projection.” In the Western Pacific west of Hawaii, there is no place other than Japan that can maintain large-scale and advanced base (industrial infrastructure) functions, including providing the necessary human resources and industrial and technological centers. Guam and other bases lack the ability to provide anything more than food, fuel, and other supplies temporarily. In order to overcome the Soviet Union’s powerful “maritime bastion strategy” of area denial, it was necessary for the United States to be able to project its forces, but if it sought to reduce the risk of attack on its forces by placing them out of range of attack, the “tyranny of distance,” as discussed later, would reduce the projection capacity of conventional forces in inverse proportion to the distances involved. To overcome this, it was essential that Japan or the United States execute a strategy of area denial in the Japanese mainland and surrounding waters to eliminate Soviet influence, while assuming the risk of attack in a contingency.

In other words, it is only with area denial based on Japan as an ally that the offensive operations of the United States, i.e., sea control and power projection, become feasible. Implementing sea control and power projection from outside the area denied by the Soviet Union, rather than attempting to outmatch their area denial capabilities, would not only increase expected damages to unacceptable levels but also decrease the probability of a successful operation. This is because the power projection capability diminishes proportionally with distance from the target area.

3.3 Derivation Process of the Analytical Framework (2): Asia-Pacific Theater in the Twenty-First Century

It was not until the latter part of the first decade in the early 2000s that it became generally recognized that China, which had been modernizing its military capabilities in proportion to its rapid economic development, was developing its area denial concept called the “A2/AD strategy,” thus challenging the military superiority of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region. In a report published in 2007, the RAND Corporation, an American think tank, stated that China would not challenge the United States head-on, but would adopt an “anti-access strategy” to improve its surprise first-strike capability and exploit the vulnerabilities of the U.S. military.²³

The military superiority that the United States and others of the Coalition of the Willing demonstrated over Iraq in the Gulf War of 1991 and the lack of effective countermeasures by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) against the U.S. Navy’s carrier strike group deployed around Taiwan during the Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996 triggered the PLA’s reforms to win the “high-technology local wars.” The RAND report stated that the Chinese military strategy did not mean that China would attempt to defeat the U.S. military head-on but it would impose a large cost on U.S. military operations, by its ability to deny access through the modernization of its C4ISR

assets. Through this, China would be able to fundamentally impact U.S.' deterrence against China by nullifying the U.S. military capability against China.²⁴

The PLA's A2/AD strategy is considered to have the strategic goal of disrupting the functions of two power projection bases: the forward-deployed forces that have been the foundation for the U.S. military to maintain military superiority in the world after the Cold War, and the expeditionary forces, mainly the expeditionary strike group consisting of carrier strike groups and assault landing crafts. The following is a definition of A2/AD from the "AirSea Battle Concept" document released by the U.S. Department of Defense in May 2013.²⁵

A2: Action intended to slow deployment of friendly forces into a theater or cause forces to operate from distances farther from the locus of conflict than they would otherwise prefer. A2 affects movement to a theater.

AD: An action intended to impede friendly operations within areas where an adversary cannot or will not prevent access. AD affects maneuver within a theater.

China's A2/AD strategy, which has been presented thus far, has as its strategic objective the denial of U.S. power projection by means of carrier strike groups and other forces that are asymmetric to U.S. assets. In a considerable way, this concept is common to the Soviet Union's maritime bastion strategy during the Cold War and corresponds to area denial in the analytical framework of this book.

In the United States, immediately following the conclusion of the Cold War, certain military experts were already cognizant of the potential threat posed to U.S. power projection by adversaries adopting an area denial strategy akin to that previously employed by the Soviet Union. As early as 1992, the U.S. Defense Department's Office of Net Assessment predicted that "Forward bases—those huge, sprawling complexes that bring to mind such places as Malta, Singapore, Subic Bay, Clark Air Base, and Dhahran—will become great liabilities, not precious assets. The reason is simple: as Third World states acquire significant numbers of...[long-range strike] systems (i.e., ballistic and cruise missiles, high-performance aircraft) and enormously more effective munitions (i.e., smart bombs; nuclear[,] chemical, and biological weapons), these bases will become very lucrative targets." With regard to carrier strike groups, which demonstrated power projection in the 1991 Gulf War, the Office wrote "conventional transport special forces and surface combat groups do not have the mobility or stealth technology to serve as the tip of the spear in forceful invasion operations," and that they could not confront advanced area denial strategies head-on.²⁶

However, from the 1990s to around 2010, it is unlikely that the U.S. Department of Defense or the U.S. military as a whole responded proactively to these observations. Aaron Friedberg wrote, "Substantial residual advantages in many areas of military capability, combined with an initial underestimation of the extent, seriousness and significance of the PRC's build-up, made this task seem less pressing for a time...If not for the 9/11 terror attacks and the 2008 financial crisis, the US would no doubt have made further progress in responding to China's initiatives than it has today."²⁷

While the United States concentrated primarily on fighting terrorism in the Middle East, U.S.-China economic interdependence meant that China's military development and its effects were not recognized as a top priority among U.S. security officials. Hence, scrutiny and responses to China's military capabilities remained constrained until approximately 2010, when the PLA exhibited further advancement in military prowess, coupled with a more defined hardline diplomatic posture from China. In fact, it was not until fiscal year 2010 that the U.S. Department of Defense began submitting an annual report to Congress on the development of the PLA's military capabilities in every year, as interest in China's military development grew within Washington.²⁸

In the meantime, the PLA has dramatically developed its A2/AD strategy. As shown in Fig. 3.4, according to the RAND Corporation, as of 2007, "dragon's lair," i.e., the PLA's ability to anti-access, was generally established within 1500 km of the Chinese coast, which includes almost all of Honshū and the Nansei Islands in Japan, Taiwan, and the northern half of the Philippine Islands. This means that all U.S. forward-deployed bases in Japan and Okinawa would fall within the PLA's area denial zone, but there are no alternative bases in the Asia-Pacific region, and in order to escape the "tyranny of distance" and project their forces, they must accept the risk of attack and take the corresponding measures, just as the United States did vis-à-vis the Soviet Union in the late Cold War with the latter's area denial strategy.

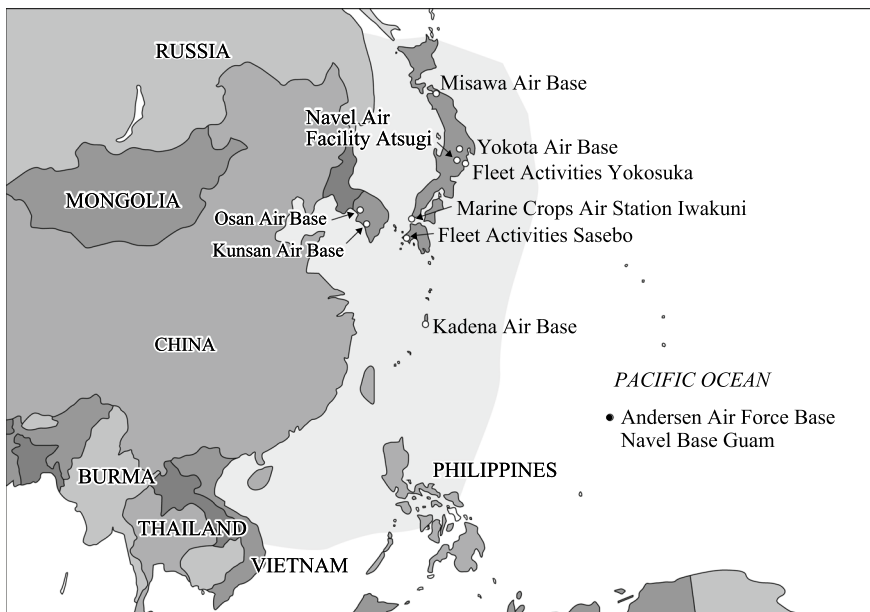


Fig. 3.4 Extent of China's area denial as of 2007. *Source* Roger Cliff, Mark Burles, Michael Chase, Derek Eaton, Kevin L. Pollpeter, *Entering Dragon's Lair: Chinese Antiaccess Strategies and Their Implications for the United States*, RAND, 2007, pp. 111–113

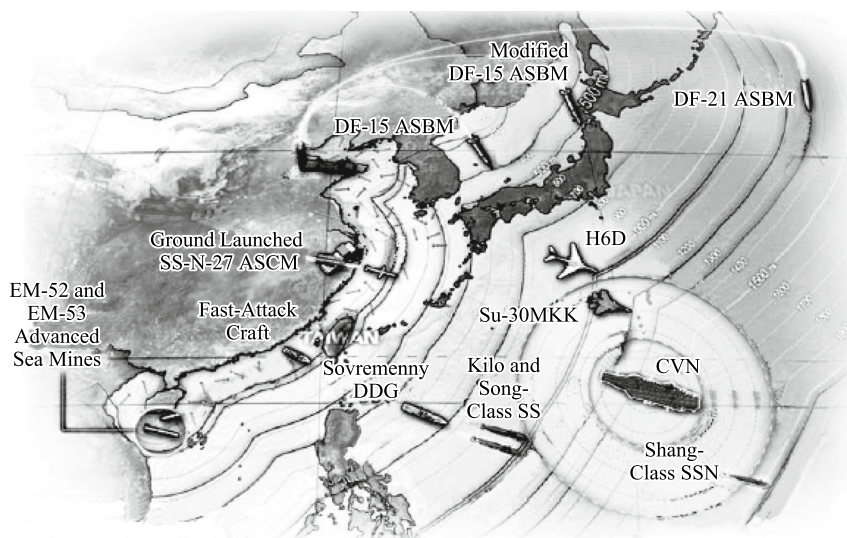


Fig. 3.5 PLA's area denial assets. *Source* Andrew Krepinevich, *Why Air Sea Battle?*, CSBA, 2010, p. 24

The specific elements of such A2/AD strategy include “ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, ASAT weapons, air defense systems, submarines, mines, and so on.”²⁹ Fig. 3.5 quotes a report published by Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., from the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) in the United States. It shows that the PLA's A2/AD strategic assets could impede U.S. power projection capability in the sea-air area away from mainland China, similar to the Soviet Union's maritime area denial strategy in the late Cold War period, as shown in Fig. 3.1.

As this book has described so far, China's A2/AD strategy can be understood as an attempt to secure localized superiority in East Asia or a part of the maritime airspace in the Western Pacific in order to impede U.S. power projection by directing power from the land domain or from the littoral zone. This strategy has many points in common with the strategy of “sea denial,” which was adopted by the Soviet Union in the late Cold War to counter U.S. maritime superiority, and in particular, the strategy of maritime fortification that planned to make the Sea of Okhotsk a sanctuary in the Far Eastern theater.³⁰

Since around 2010, there have been various discussions on the US's response to Chinese A2/AD, including the Air-Sea Battle response. Friedberg defines Air-Sea Battle, a measure for the United States to demonstrate power projection, as a “direct approach” to China's A2/AD strategy.³¹ After summarizing criticisms of the Air-Sea Battle approach and various discussions on alternative strategies, he presents two “indirect alternatives,” which he divides into two categories—the “distant blockade” and “maritime denial.”³² The distant blockade is aimed at blocking oil tankers and other maritime traffic to China outside the A2/AD zone, thereby economically draining the country. The maritime denial strategy focuses on preventing China's

deployment of maritime air and sea assets, mainly through the use of submarines, mines, stealth aircraft, and unmanned aerial vehicles. Not able to secure maritime supremacy, Japan is attempting to counter China's area denial by strengthening its own "area denial" capabilities, such as increasing the number of submarines and surface-to-ship missile units on its outer islands. As a result, a "maritime no-man's-land" is formed in the sea area in question.³³ Therefore, Friedberg's framework assesses and appraises the anticipated outcomes, China's response, and the risk of escalation, including nuclear contingencies, from the vantage point of U.S. military strategy vis-à-vis whether it would involve direct strikes on the Chinese mainland.

On the other hand, if the measures proposed by Friedberg are compared to the analytical framework of this book, the measures of the United States and its allies in response to China's territorial denial are: (1) maritime denial as area denial implemented in the Japanese mainland and surrounding waters to offset China's area denial; (2) a distant blockade implemented by gaining superiority in the U.S.' maritime domain through sea control in the open sea away from the Chinese mainland; and (3) establishment of superiority in sea control through Air-Sea battle, followed by power projection by carrier strike groups and other means.

The relationship between the United States, Japan, and the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War was based on the estimation that the Soviet Union's maritime area denial was approximately 2000 km from the Soviet mainland and the surrounding closed sea area. The "Soviet area denial" to counter "U.S. sea control and power projection" and "Japan's area denial to secure a base from which to exercise U.S. sea control and power projection." In contrast to this analysis, the dynamic among Japan, the United States, and China concerning China's maritime expansion and military strengthening revolves around several key factors: the assessment that China's A2/AD zone typically extends 1500 km or more from its mainland; China's adoption of area denial tactics in response to U.S. sea control and power projection efforts; and Japan's own area denial strategies aimed at securing a base for facilitating U.S. sea control and power projection activities.

Thus, when each participating actor possesses advanced military technology, it is possible to carry out high-intensity area denial in the distant sea areas beyond 1000 km from the shore. It is possible to effectively block the actions of other countries not only in geographically closed sea areas such as the Sea of Okhotsk during the Cold War, the Yellow Sea, the Bohai Sea, or the South China Sea today, but also in significant areas of the open ocean such as the Western Pacific, which is geographically open and easily accessible to many actors. Therefore, when discussing military strategy in the maritime domain, the element of "power directed from the surface or coastal areas to the open sea" should not be excluded. It is essential to use an analytical framework that includes not only sea control and power projection, which have constituted conventional military strategy in the maritime domain, but also area denial.

3.4 Debates Over the Concept of Sea Control: Classical Sea Power Argument

While military strategy is essentially concerned with the defense of the nation or the invasion of another nation, military strategy in the maritime domain is unique in this respect. The modern theory of sea power starts from Mahan's belief that "the first and most obvious light in which the sea presents itself from the political and social point of view is that of a great highway," and his assertion that "this protection in time of war must be extended by armed shipping."³⁴ The starting point of the sea power argument was to achieve "superiority in the maritime domain," which would contribute to colonial domination, not to defend one's own territory or to advance on other countries. Mahan's theory of sea power, therefore, started from the proposition of how to protect the maritime traffic between the colonies and the home country so that modern states could safely transport resources from the colonies to the home country.

In other words, "in these three things—production, shipping and colonies—is to be found the key to much of the history, as well as of the policy, of nations bordering upon the sea," and, further: "sea power in the broad sense...includes not only the military strength afloat, that rules the sea or any part of it by force of arms, but also the peaceful commerce and shipping."³⁵ For this reason, for Mahan, "naval strategy has for its end to found, support, and increase, as well in peace as in war, the sea power of a country."³⁶

Against this backdrop, Mahan's writings provide a wide-ranging discussion of sea power, both in peacetime and wartime, from the seventeenth century onward, a period that includes the Russo-Japanese War at the beginning of the twentieth century. His views have been highly praised from the perspective of military strategy and have had a profound influence on the world's major navies. His arguments have been evaluated, and in some cases criticized, in terms of several issues, the most influential of which is "command of the sea" or "sea control" and his strategy of using a "concentration of forces" and "decisive battles at sea" as the means of gaining sea control.

As previously mentioned, Mahan did not give strict definitions of key concepts such as "sea power" in the course of his discussions. The same is true for the concept of sea control, which is considered to be the most important, and whether sea control means "the complete occupation of a specific sea area," as it does on land, has been the subject of various disputes since ancient times. Vice Admiral Kitamura Kenichi, a former officer of the Imperial Japanese Navy and a postwar Commander in Chief of the Self-Defense Fleet of JMSDF, who translated Mahan's *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*, repeatedly introduces cases in his book in which countries failed to completely impede the enemy from impacting commerce despite having destroyed the enemy fleet. In his translation, Kitamura then provides the following interpretation of Mahan's concept of sea control.

[Mahan] acknowledged that complete sea control is impossible and is ultimately a matter of degree. In other words, geographically, it could be a wide area of warfare in general, a relatively large area of sea within that area, or a limited localized maritime area. In addition, within each geographical area, to what extent can friendly ships operate safely (freely or at

great risk, on a large or small scale), and to what extent can friendly ships interfere with the actions of enemy ships.³⁷

As shown in Fig. 3.1, the state in which the Soviet Union exerted its exclusive power in a part of the ocean that was geographically and climatically closed in the late Cold War was classified as “sea control areas” in U.S. *Maritime Strategy*, and the outer edges were defined as “sea denial areas.” This is an example of how to explain the degree to which the oceans are controlled in the theory of sea power, but there is no fixed consensus on the definition of concepts such as sea control, or on the usage of the terms. For example, Geoffrey Till, based on the perspectives of geographical area and time, has organized the concept of sea control as shown in Table 3.2.³⁸

While the sea control areas in Fig. 3.1 correspond roughly to the “absolute control” in Table 3.2 from the standpoint of the Soviet Union, it cannot be said with certainty that they are absolute or permanent, as Till indicates in his concept. This is because the U.S. *Maritime Strategy* was intended to project forces, including carrier battle groups, into this maritime control area in the event of a contingency, and maritime control is more fluid than the occupation of territory in the land domain. In addition, the outer edge of the maritime control area is defined as the maritime denial area, and if this is compared with Table 3.2, most of it corresponds to the state of “working control.” In Fig. 3.1, there is no corresponding concept of “control in dispute.”

What Till shows is a classification based on the degree of control, i.e., the extent to which a nation controls the ocean in a particular maritime area as a result of geographical conditions or the military balance between one side and the other, etc. This is to some extent a subjective assessment of the degree or state of sea control. Like Kitamura’s interpretation mentioned above, this is an attempt to clarify the controlling maritime domain concept presented by Mahan, and perhaps to further develop a more precise discussion of the controlling maritime domain concept. On the other hand, even if we define the degree of such control of maritime domain by subdividing it, it is the result only measures of the military balance between the two sides at a

Table 3.2 Till’s classification of sea control

	Name	Style
1	Absolute control (command of the sea)	Complete freedom to operate without interruption. Enemy cannot operate at all
2	Working control	General ability to operate with high degree of freedom. Enemy can only operate with high risk
3	(Control in dispute)	Each side operates with considerable risk. This involves the need to establish working control for limited portions for limited times to conduct specific operations
4	Enemy Working control	Position 2 reversed
5	Enemy Absolute control	Position 1 reversed

Source Geoffrey Till, *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century, Revised and Updated, Fourth Edition*, Routledge, 2018, p. 190

certain point in time, and thus difficult to grasp the military strategic objectives of each country or to infer subsequent trends regarding the military balance.

Hence, the concept of sea control has persisted as a central tenet within the theory of maritime power, stimulating considerable scholarly debate. Regardless of fluctuations in its definition, it is clear that the concept of sea control has been extremely important, particularly in the context of military strategy in the maritime domain. Mahan wrote, “only by military command of the sea by prolonged control of the strategic centres of commerce, can such an attack be fatal; and such control can be wrung from a powerful navy only by fighting and overcoming it.”³⁹ Mahan insisted on the importance of “decisive battles at sea,” in which the enemy fleet is destroyed at sea in order to control the sea, and this had a great influence on the naval strategies of major countries, including the Japanese Imperial Navy as well as the Anglo-American navies.

Mahan argued that to defeat the enemy fleet at sea, one must initially concentrate one’s own fleet for a decisive battle, drawing parallels to Carl Clausewitz’s assertion about land battles that “defense is a stronger form of war.” Mahan concluded that in naval warfare, unlike on land, “the radical disadvantage of the defensive is evident,” and thus, advocated that “every proposal to use a navy as an instrument of pure passive defense is found faulty upon particular examination.”⁴⁰ He criticized the distribution of forces “for the distribution was that of police, not that of a military organization calculated for military use,” and stated that “how entirely concentration—which is military—has taken the place of dispersion, it is needless to insist,” regarding naval strategy in the early twentieth century.⁴¹

Thus, Mahan’s thoughts were understood by the navies of various countries as an offensive “decisive battle at sea” concept, in which the key components were “how to destroy the enemy fleet by concentrating surface combatants at sea, which are more flexible than those on the ground, and how to gain sea control. Needless to say, the idea of a decisive battle at sea itself is a thing of the past, along with the big-ship, big-arms philosophy, and so on, but some of the principles suggested by Mahan, such as the flexibility or mobility of sea power and the ability to reap great benefits from having access to the sea, are considered to be universal. Citing Edward Luttwak’s argument that the strategic importance of Mahan’s theory of sea power was fundamentally valid, Gray states, “Mahan was (mainly) right” and explains his reasoning as follows.⁴²

The strategic experience of the twentieth century has demonstrated that Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan was wiser than his critics.

The flexibility of sea power derives from the facts that the world’s land area is essentially insular in geostrategic character. 71 percent of the surface of the earth is water, a significant percentage of the world’s population lives within 200 kilometers of the sea, and naval power can loiter with variable menace for long periods without intruding into geography owned by friends or potential foes.

Mahan’s thinking provides one perspective to explain one of the analytical frameworks of this book, namely, the struggle for maritime traffic routes, or sea control. As mentioned above, Mahan’s arguments have had a strong influence on the navies of

various countries, as they have been understood in terms of the concepts of sea control, concentration of forces, and decisive battles at sea. Elinor Sloan notes that “scholars have pointed to Mahan’s failure to incorporate power projection from the sea onto land and the interdependence of armies and navies in wartime as key shortfalls in his thinking.”⁴³ And sea power cannot independently and decisively overthrow a state actor on land. As mentioned above, Gray argues the usefulness of sea power but at the same time, also argues that “It is a limitation of seapower that it cannot come to grips with great continental power with a realistic prospect of success... Britain’s Royal Navy alone could not defeat Napoleonic France or Wilhelmine or Nazi Germany. Furthermore, that Royal Navy could not even compel the navies of France and Germany to put to sea so that they could be sunk.”⁴⁴

From this perspective, it was Corbett who first pointed out the incompleteness of Mahan’s theory of sea power. Corbett did not deny the importance of sea control, arguing that “the object of naval warfare must always be directly or indirectly either to secure the command of the sea or to prevent the enemy from securing it.” On the other hand, he pointed out, “the most common situation in naval war is that neither side has the command; that the normal position is not a commanded sea, but an uncommanded sea,” and argued: “The error is the very general assumption that if one belligerent loses the command of the sea it passes at once to the other belligerent.”⁴⁵ In other words, Corbett’s view is that the situation of gaining sea control itself is in principle unrealizable, and “when the command is lost or won pure naval strategy comes to an end.”⁴⁶

After presenting the premise that the “act of disputing command of the sea” is the normal state of military strategy in the maritime domain, Corbett presents the following three areas for the execution of battles in the maritime domain. First, as “methods of securing command,” he lists the realization of decisive battles at sea and the blockade of the sea. Next, as “methods of disputing command,” the “fleet in being” and limited counterattacks are discussed as defensive naval operations. He then discusses the importance of defense against aggression, offense and defense in maritime commerce, offense and defense in expeditionary operations, and support operations as “methods of exercising command” after securing sea control.⁴⁷ Corbett writes, “we engage in exercising command whenever we conduct operations which are directed not against the enemy’s battle fleet, but to using sea communications for our own purposes,” emphasizing what is to be done once sea control is gained, rather than the sea controls themselves.⁴⁸

Thus, Corbett presented a critical perspective on Mahan based on the premise that military strategy cannot be completed in the maritime domain.⁴⁹ Corbett stated that “by maritime strategy we mean the principles which govern a war in which the sea is a substantial factor,” and then argued as follows⁵⁰:

Naval strategy is but that part of it which determines the movements of the fleet when maritime strategy has determined what part the fleet must play in relation to the action of the land forces; for it scarcely needs saying that it is almost impossible that a war can be decided by naval action alone.

Corbett's discussion was not limited to the navy, so that it was titled "maritime strategy," rather than "naval strategy." It also emphasized "operations to control the sea," i.e., "what to do from the maritime domain after securing sea control." In this regard, Corbett's argument holds significant importance, not only for its critical appraisal or supplementation of Mahan's argument, but also for furnishing a perspective to elucidate the second crucial element of maritime military strategy: the "orientation of power from the sea to the surface and littoral zones." In the post-Cold War era, when the U.S. Forces made a major shift in its military strategy, Corbett provided a significant theoretical perspective as to power projection.

On the other hand, useful aircraft had not yet emerged at the time when Mahan and Corbett were discussing the issue. In the world that followed, several military revolutions occurred that revolutionized military strategy, such as the introduction of nuclear weapons, aircraft and missiles capable of long-range air strike, and advanced command and control communication systems, and it is not appropriate to discuss the arguments of Mahan and Corbett absent of these advances when discussing military strategy in the maritime domain, as has been done in the past.⁵¹ Considering such technologies and rapid operational tempo, it is almost impossible to witness in the current world such "decisive battles" as the Battle of Tsushima of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, following these military revolutions, "the orientation of power from terrestrial and coastal areas to the sea" has become a reality in the open sea, more than 1000 km away from land, and military strategy in the maritime domain is now based on the orientation of power in terms of area denial, sea control, and power projection, as well as on three objectives based on these three directions. It is appropriate to use three analytical frameworks based on the direction of power (i.e., area denial, sea control, and power projection) and its objectives.

3.5 The Role of Military Power in the Maritime Domain (1): Sea Power Argument Since World War II

As Sloan's passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter indicates, almost all theories of sea power up to the present have taken as their starting point the dualism introduced in this book between Mahan's sea control and the post-seizure operations suggested by Corbett, such as sea control and power projection. On the other hand, the concept of the sea power argument that has primarily been developed since the Cold War period has mostly concerned the usage of sea power in phases other than pure combat. Since the Cold War, with the advent of nuclear weapons and the two world wars, the bar for the use of military power has been gradually raised, and the likelihood of a high-intensity war, especially between major powers, is extremely low. Even as the war in Ukraine has dragged on, Russia and NATO have carefully avoided direct conflict. As a result, military power tends to be used primarily for deterrence,

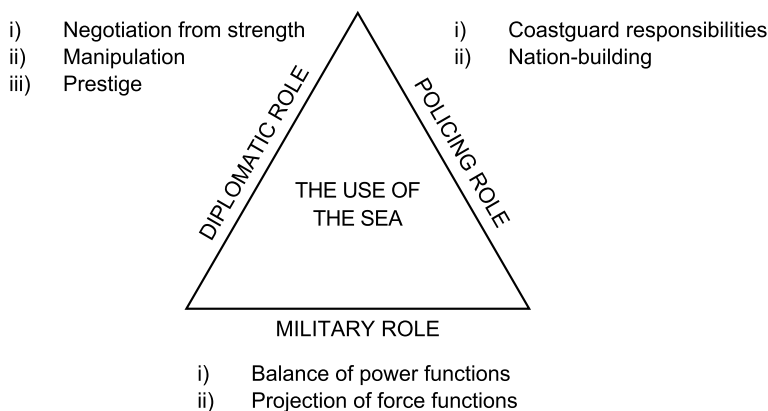


Fig. 3.6 Booth's three elements of navies. Source Ken Booth, *Navies and Foreign Policy*, Routledge, 2014, p. 16

and in peacetime or low-intensity conflicts and confrontations, it is bound by legality under international law or legitimacy gained through support in international public opinion, and its primary role tends to be of limited use. This trend has not changed in principle since the end of the Cold War.

According to Ken Booth (Fig. 3.6), the Navy has three roles (three elements): a military role, a policing role, and a diplomatic role. The military role in Booth's discussion includes "strategic nuclear deterrence," "conventional deterrence and defence," "extended deterrence and defence," and "(maintaining of) international order."⁵² The policing role includes maintaining sovereignty, resource enjoyment and maintenance of good order as a coast guard mission, or contributing to domestic stability and development as a nation-building.⁵³ The three elements of the Navy, as described by Booth, are still very well recognized by navies around the world, and at almost every international naval conference, some of the participants can be seen introducing the activities of their own navies quoting Booth.

For example, in the section of the British maritime doctrine entitled "The Roles of British Maritime Power," the following description is indicative⁵⁴: "Using Alfred T Mahan and Julian Corbett's works, Ken Booth described a 'trinity' of 3 characteristic modes of action by which navies carry out their purposes: namely the military, the diplomatic and the policing functions...These functions have evolved into the following doctrinal roles: War-fighting, Maritime Security and International Engagement."

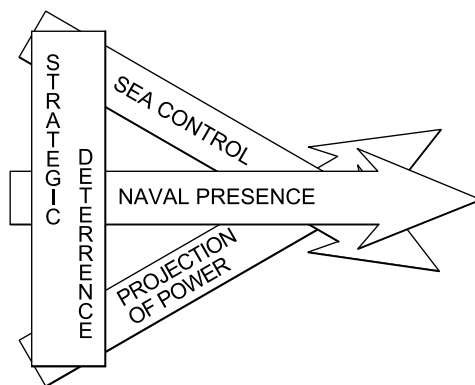
Booth's interpretation of naval power shows that sea power has been used flexibly in a wide range of situations, from peacetime to contingency. When land forces operate beyond their own territory, it means in principle the invasion of another country, but the flexibility of sea power to have a variety of missions and to operate in a wide geographical area even in peacetime has been widely accepted in the world.

Edward Luttwak states: "In having a peacetime political function in addition to their combat capabilities, naval forces are like all other forms of military power,

only more so.”⁵⁵ According to him, the purpose of the political use of naval power, when summed up, is “suasion” of the national will of the other party. The U.S. Navy made more than 70 suasions in various forms worldwide since World War II through the early 1970s.⁵⁶ According to Luttwak’s definition, there are two types of suasion: “latent suasion,” which has some impact on neighboring countries through the continued deployment or presence of naval forces, and “active suasion,” which expresses the will of the state by taking concrete action.⁵⁷

Since the Cold War, sea power has been the subject of much debate regarding its role outside of wartime, and has expanded its sphere of activity into peacetime, winning support for its use from many nations. This trend has often been expressed not only by researchers but also by naval officers. Vice Admiral Stansfield Turner, then president of the U.S. Naval War College, described the U.S. Navy’s mission as the following four functions: “strategic deterrence,” “sea control,” “projection of power ashore,” and “naval presence.”⁵⁸ Turner noted that “the first and only mission of the earliest navies was Sea Control,” but that “during the nineteenth century, the term “gunboat diplomacy” came into the naval vocabulary,” and that the use of sea power outside of wartime had long been recognized.⁵⁹ Figure 3.7 shows how the U.S. Navy’s mission is based on strategic deterrence, which is fundamental to the nation’s survival, with the additional roles of sea control, presence, and power projection.

Similar explanatory techniques have been commonly and frequently used because explaining the Navy’s contributions to diplomacy, security, and other areas without war fight is useful in explaining the Navy’s own missions and justifying its actions. The U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard’s *Cooperative Strategy in the 21st Century*, updated in 2015 (CS21 revised), identifies four priority capabilities for “seapower in support of national security”: “all domain access” to meet A2/AD



INTERDEPENDENT NAVAL MISSIONS

USEFULNESS OF CATEGORIZING NAVY MISSIONS

Fig. 3.7 Turner’s view of missions of the U.S. Navy. *Source* Stansfield Turner, “Missions of the U.S. Navy,” *U.S. Naval War College Review*, Vol. XXVI, Number 5, March–April 1974, p. 2.)

challenges, “deterrence,” “sea control,” “power projection,” and “maritime security,” against terrorism, or countering smuggling or piracy, and addressing threats to freedom of navigation in the maritime domain.⁶⁰

According to Luttwak, in order to make effective suasions to an opponent, it is essential that the opponent perceive that your naval forces are in action. Thus, when naval power is used politically in peacetime, it is necessary to act in a manner that is visible to all, and in an intimidating manner to communicate one’s intentions and capabilities to an opponent.⁶¹

On the other hand, assets that are readily visible are useful for political presence in peacetime, but in wartime their advantages are also their disadvantages, as they increase the risk of attack and reduce survivability. Luttwak notes that “the possibility of gross divergence between perceived capabilities, which determine political effectiveness and combat viability has been substantially increased in recent years by the much greater significance of the ‘invisible’ element in naval capabilities, primarily the quality of sensor and data-handling systems.”⁶² More specifically, “one can always evaluate a four-gun ‘Skoryi’ destroyer in Syrian hands as inferior to a one-gun U.S. Navy destroyer-escort by ignoring the nominal gun-power imbalance and resorting to high-confidence estimates of combat performance.”⁶³

This argument by Luttwak was made in the 1970s, but if we apply it to the present day, naval vessels with flashy-looking cannons may be useful for political presence, but they cannot cope with modern warfare, such as with supersonic missiles etc. Conversely, low-visibility submarines and stealth aircraft increase the survivability and success rate of attacks by reducing the possibility of detection in wartime, but for this reason they are not necessarily efficient assets in terms of political presence in peacetime.

Thus, influence exerted through political presence or suasions in peacetime is not proportional to combat capability or survivability in wartime. This perspective is very important when analyzing the military power of each country in the maritime domain. Can a country’s naval strength effectively respond to high-intensity conventional warfare? Does its capability remain confined to its immediate geographical vicinity, or does it extend to the open sea? On the other hand, even if large surface vessels with apparent impact are deployed, are they useless in high-intensity battles and can only be used for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in peacetime or at the level of low-intensity confrontation and conflict? A rigorous capability-based analysis is needed to answer these questions. Through such an analysis, it is possible to clarify higher-level military strategic objectives, such as the extent to which a country seeks to exert influence independently in the maritime domain, or whether it seeks to expand its national interests based on U.S. maritime superiority, or whether it seeks to eliminate U.S. military influence in its own vicinity.

Discussing the non-wartime uses of sea power is useful in explaining how a nation uses its sea power in general. On the other hand, when attempting an objective analysis of the purpose for which a nation has formulated its military power in the maritime domain, it is incorrect to conflate peacetime usage with wartime capability in order to rigorously analyze the geographical scope and the degree to which it is capable of withstanding a war of high intensity. The appropriate framework for such an

analysis would not prioritize political or diplomatic roles, but the purpose of using military power in the maritime domain, such as area denial, sea control, and power projection.⁶⁴

3.6 The Role of Military Power in the Maritime Domain (2): Deterrence by Conventional Forces

This section addresses two of the three assumptions outlined in Chap. 1: (1) the presumption that major actors behave rationally to some extent, and (2) the belief that nuclear deterrence remains functional in principle even within a multipolar global landscape. It further delineates the consequential implications for the subsequent case studies presented in the forthcoming chapters. These deliberations extend beyond the scope of maritime power theory, encompassing conventional forces overall, including land forces particularly. A report on extended deterrence published by a U.S. think tank, the Atlantic Council, in October 2014 states that “U.S. extended deterrence in Asia, involving the full spectrum from nuclear to conventional capabilities, faces an array of new challenges.”⁶⁵ It also noted that the concept of deterrence is not limited to a traditional purely military element, but also encompasses economic roles such as economic sanctions.⁶⁶ In addition, the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation (Japan-U.S. Guidelines), which were revised in April 2015, include the following sentence⁶⁷:

The United States will continue to extend deterrence to Japan *through the full range of capabilities, including U.S. nuclear forces.* [emphasis added]

In other words, it is the common understanding of the Japanese and U.S. governments that U.S. extended deterrence is not simply the provision of a “nuclear umbrella” but covers a broader area. This understanding that deterrence can be expected from conventional forces other than nuclear forces, and even non-military power, is not a recent development, but has been shared to some extent since the Cold War period. It was during the Kennedy Administration that conventional forces as a deterrent force began to be publicly discussed. The Eisenhower Administration’s strategy of deterring an adversary by anticipating unbearable damage through mass nuclear retaliation, the so-called “deterrence by punishment,” was based on the criticism of the rigidity of the massive retaliation strategy that it could not respond to a crisis that did not lead to a full-scale nuclear war.⁶⁸ As a result, “flexible response strategy” which emphasizes non-strategic nuclear and conventional forces appeared under the Kennedy Administration.

From the Eisenhower through the Kennedy administrations, the possibility of the tactical use of nuclear weapons, or “limited nuclear war,” was discussed, but in the end, once nuclear weapons are used, no significant steps can be taken to prevent an escalation to an all-out “thermonuclear exchange.” As a result, “it was not long before most academic and independent strategists lost their enthusiasm for concepts of limited nuclear warfare.”⁶⁹

In this regard, Glenn Snyder, in his 1961 book, wrote: “of course, this distinction (deterrence by punishment or deterrence by denial) is not sharp or absolute: a “denial” response, especially if it involves the use of nuclear weapons tactically, can mean high direct costs, plus the risk that the war may get out of hand and ultimately involve severe nuclear punishment for both sides.”⁷⁰ It did not take long for the theory of nuclear deterrence to be refined to the point where “taken together this legacy implied that the sole long-term role of nuclear weapons was to deter their use by the enemy.”⁷¹ In other words, it was recognized that conflicts could only be responded to with conventional forces as nuclear deterrence itself was working. However, it can be assumed that these arguments were made with the use of tactical nuclear weapons in the European theater or other land areas in mind, without a clear distinction being made between land and maritime. As has been previously pointed out, should tactical nuclear weapons be used in the maritime domain, the likelihood of human suffering would be low due to the limited number of noncombatants. Nonetheless, while the threshold for employing tactical nuclear weapons in the maritime realm may be comparatively low when juxtaposed with the land domain, such usage is predicated upon the assumption that it remains transitory and does not lead to further escalation.

Documents on the 1971 U.S. defense budget provide an insight into the evolution of the U.S. Department of Defense’s strategic thinking and the deterrence concept from the early Cold War to the early 1970s. The document shows the “Eisenhower Strategy” (the so-called New Look Strategy), the “Kennedy-Johnson Strategy” (the Flexible Response Strategy), and the “Nixon Strategy for Peace” (the strategic concept based on the Guam Doctrine or Nixon Strategy). Figure 3.8 is an image of the Nixon Strategy.

In the New Look Strategy, conventional forces are positioned as a “tripwire” for nuclear war in the European theater, but in the Flexible Response Strategy, they are transformed into “General Purpose Forces” that include suppression of civil unrest and military support for other countries, and thus are responsible for a “Flexible Response War” rather than simply as “Strategic Deterrence.”⁷² The Nixon Strategy continued to look to conventional forces for deterrence, but it divided the range from low-intensity conflicts to full-scale nuclear exchange into three categories: “deterrence of localized conflicts,” “major war deterrence,” and “strategic deterrence.” The forces corresponding to “major war deterrence” include some theater nuclear forces, but as in the flexible response strategy, the main forces are conventional forces of Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps.

In his 1983 book, *Conventional Deterrence*, John Mearsheimer discusses land warfare in the European theater as a concrete example of deterrence by conventional forces and introduces it through a dichotomous comparison of a *Blitzkrieg* (lightning attack) and attrition strategies.⁷³ Since the beginning of the Cold War, the conventional forces of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO), mainly armored divisions, have been far superior to those of the NATO side, and it has been considered highly probable that the WTO would conduct a *Blitzkrieg*-like attack at the beginning of a war to succeed in a deep vertical invasion and achieve its strategic objective of a decisive victory on the European front. Mearsheimer, however, doubted this point and estimated that, although NATO’s conventional forces were inferior, if deployed

NIXON STRATEGY FOR PEACE

STRENGTH - PARTNERSHIP - NEGOTIATIONS

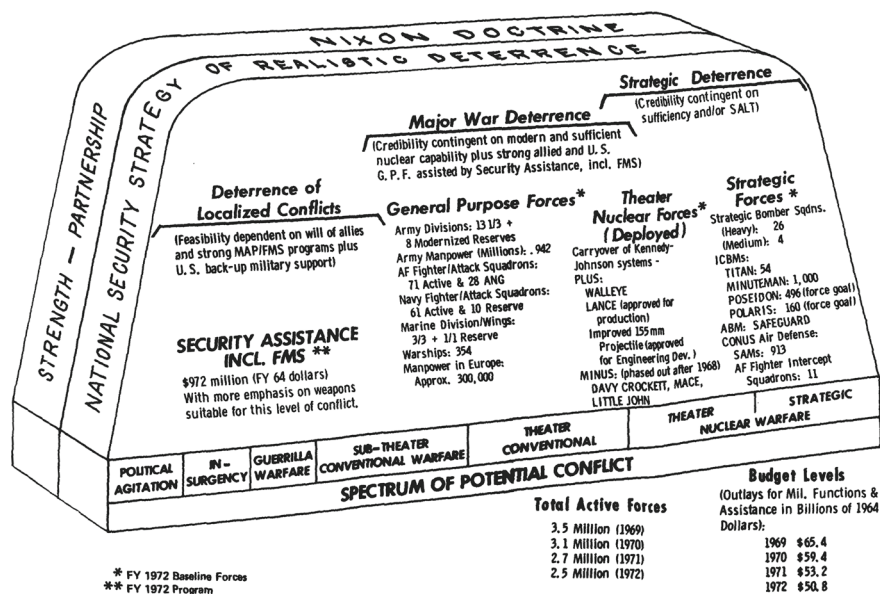


Fig. 3.8 Image of the Nixon strategy. *Source* U.S. Department of Defense, "Statement of Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird on the FY 1972-76 Defense Program and the 1972 Defense Budget," March 9, 1971, p. 161

effectively, a Blitzkrieg by Warsaw Pact forces would not be able to completely defeat NATO forces. According to his estimate, the Warsaw Pact forces would slow down their advance once they achieved their limited operational objectives and would be forced to turn to the defensive in order to secure their previously acquired territory. As a result, it was expected that the Soviet Union would enter a war of attrition, and as a result, the Soviet Union would not be able to achieve its strategic goal of conquering continental Europe, and would therefore be discouraged from a ground invasion of Western Europe.⁷⁴ NATO's conventional forces (even if they were inferior to those of the WTO) could be expected to have a deterrence by denial function and the use of precision guided munitions (PGM) would further help the defenders.⁷⁵ Mearsheimer's argument does not address non-nuclear land forces merely in terms of superiority or inferiority in terms of the level of engagement and operations, but rather in terms of the conventional forces' ability to deter or deny a land invasion. The significance of Mearsheimer's argument is that he saw the success or failure of achieving political and strategic objectives and their estimates as factors that would influence the perceptions and decisions of both East and West, viewed from the perspective of the deterrence by denial of conventional forces.

The early 1980s was the era of the so-called New Cold War, during which the nuclear capabilities of the United States and the Soviet Union were in competition with each other, and the hurdles to the use of nuclear force were higher than ever. Therefore, the main problem in the European theater was how to make up for the inferiority of NATO's conventional forces against the land forces of the WTO which had been considered superior. For this reason, then U.S. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown proposed the "Offset Strategy." This strategy aimed to circumvent direct confrontation with the more powerful WTO forces. According to this, NATO sought to enhance its capacity to disrupt enemy supply lines and command structure using its strengths in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), as well as its air power and forward-deployed assets. These measures were leveraged to counterbalance the Warsaw Pact's conventional warfare superiority and to convey to the East the unfeasibility of its strategic objectives.⁷⁶

The United States, believing that it had lost its nuclear superiority, thus tried to deter the WTO side with conventional forces while continuing its efforts to at least maintain the balance of nuclear forces, a concept shared among theorists. Since the Kennedy Administration, resources have been continuously allocated to deterrence by conventional forces.

This trend has continued even after the Cold War. The *Strategic Defence Review* (SDR 1998), published by the British Ministry of Defence in 1998, stated that "both nuclear and conventional forces therefore contribute to deterrence, providing a credible range of options for responding proportionately to an aggressor's behavior."⁷⁷ As discussed in Chap. 1, the mechanism by which deterrence works is through the communication of one's capabilities and intentions to one's adversary.

The disappearance of the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War meant that the United States and other NATO countries no longer had a counterpart with whom to communicate their capabilities and intentions. In other words, there was no one to deter against. Needless to say, deterrence theory was a concept that evolved from the starting point of the nuclear capabilities of the United States and the Soviet Union and of course deterrence's reason for being had to adapt greatly when the sole threat of Soviet nuclear forces ceased to exist and was followed instead by local and religious conflicts and terrorism.⁷⁸ Lawrence Freedman, in his 2004 book on the mindset after the end of the Cold War, writes⁷⁹:

Nuclear weapons would not play a central role in Western strategy: requirements could largely be met by conventional systems, so there was no need to rationalize their use. Deterrence was no longer needed.

As mentioned earlier, the United States has maintained a concept that expects conventional forces to serve as deterrence since the Kennedy years. However, it is also clear that the greatest pillar of deterrence has been the deterrence by punishment of strategic nuclear forces. However, from a practical standpoint, nuclear weapons are not useful in deterring the religious and ethnic conflicts or terrorism that have proliferated in the post-Cold War world. For this reason, the United States announced a review of its strategic nuclear posture at the end of 2001, immediately after 9/11. The *Nuclear Posture Review 2001* (NPR 2001) revised the three pillars of the

conventional strategic nuclear posture (Triad), namely “long-range bombers, inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBM), and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM),” and identified the following three points as “a New Triad.”⁸⁰

- (1) Offensive strike systems (both nuclear and non-nuclear)
- (2) Defenses (both active and passive)
- (3) A revitalized defense infrastructure that will provide new capabilities in a timely fashion to meet emerging threats.

The preface to *NPR 2001* includes a statement by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld that “the combination of new capabilities that make up the New Triad reduce the risk to the nation as it draws its nuclear forces.”⁸¹ Sloan, in discussing *NPR 2001*, wrote, “by including defence in its strategic doctrine, as well as potential counterforce capabilities, the NPR signaled a conceptual focus on ‘deterrence by punishment’ orientation to a more prominent focus on ‘deterrence by denial.’ Many of these new elements sparked interest and debate in the 2000s, which only served to push forward the boundaries of strategic thought on nuclear power and deterrence.”⁸² Thus, the concept of deterrence became more multilayered after the end of the Cold War, and the center of gravity shifted from nuclear forces to conventional forces or non-military means.

However, it is also true that the need to discuss “nuclear escalation” has arisen again in light of the increasing risk of limited use of nuclear weapons by Russia in the war in Ukraine. At present (September 2023), threats (blackmail) regarding the limited use of nuclear weapons may be effective for intimidation of enemies, but the bar for actual use is still considered to be extremely high. This discussion is beyond the scope of this book, and it is premature to offer any hypotheses at this point, but the debate may develop as the outcome of the war in Ukraine becomes clearer.

3.7 Hurdle No. 1 in the Use of Military Force: Avoidance of Casualties

So far, the discourse has primarily centered on the notion that nuclear weapons serve solely to dissuade adversaries from their use, thereby establishing a stable nuclear deterrent. Consequently, it is anticipated that conventional weaponry will contribute significantly to the overall deterrence strategy. In addition to this, an overview of military operations after the Cold War suggests that hurdles to the use of conventional weapons have also arisen. This section discusses the hurdles to the use of large-scale conventional forces from the perspective of “avoidance of human casualties.”

The end of the Cold War brought to light conflicts and disputes over religious, ethnic, and territorial sovereignty, and other ideological confrontations that had been previously suppressed, and so it did not bring the world the “peace dividend” that had initially been expected.⁸³ From the 1990s to the early 2000s, during the War on Terror, the likelihood of using nuclear weapons went down a lot compared to the Cold War era. Concerns about the collapse of the Soviet Union and the proliferation of

weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and the production technology that accompanied the proliferation of such weapons were some of the major security issues of the period. The actual response to emerging conflicts was the use of conventional forces, especially air strike capability, which consisted mainly of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) networks and precision-guided weapons, as demonstrated in the Gulf War of 1991.

Paradoxically, this situation means that the developed countries avoided ground warfare as much as possible. Rupert Smith, the former British Army General who was the commander of the UN forces in the Bosnia-Herzegovina conflict, noted that one of the characteristics of modern military operations is, “we fight to preserve the force,” based on his experience that political leaders in NATO member countries strongly avoided the use of military force, especially ground troops, and conducted military operations with many restrictions. The reasons are summarized next.⁸⁴

- (1) In the twenty-first century, many nations will be unable to continue military operations because of the high probability that they will lose the support of their citizens among the “three synchronizations of the state, the people, and the military,” the so-called Clausewitz’s “Trinity of War,” due to the number of casualties they suffer.
- (2) Most nations that have abolished conscription cannot draft large numbers of personnel, and from a cost–benefit analysis, it is mistaken to lose the highly skilled soldiers needed to conduct modern warfare in the first place.
- (3) Even if a nation has a conscription system, soldiers who volunteer for military operations abroad are valuable and cannot be selected for operations that can easily wear them down.
- (4) The equipment carried by soldiers and troops has become highly-technologized and expensive and cannot be easily reproduced and replenished even when worn out.

This tendency to avoid ground warfare with large-scale human casualties is not limited to Europe, but also applies to the United States. Since 2012, the administration of Barack Obama ended stabilization operations in the Middle East and advocated reform of the U.S. military centered on defense budget cuts and a rebalancing to the Asia–Pacific region. The pioneering *Defense Strategic Guideline* (DSG) states that “U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations,” a phrase that was echoed in the *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014* (QDR 2014) among others.⁸⁵

Luttwak, like Smith, also shows that political leaders in various countries vigorously sought to avoid casualties in conflicts that occurred in various parts of the world after the Cold War, and states that the era of “post-heroic war” has arrived.⁸⁶ According to Luttwak, this is not necessarily due to being a democracy, or to the influence of public opinion associated with television coverage.⁸⁷ The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, which was a totalitarian state and had strict press control, was extremely sensitive as the Soviet military was strongly averse to human casualties. He also points out that this was because local commanders were under pressure from Moscow to do everything in their power to avoid casualties.

Luttwak attributes the post-Cold War trend toward greater avoidance of human casualties to the declining birthrates and the intolerance of losing young families, not only in developed countries but also in developing countries.⁸⁸ This trend from the late Cold War to the post-Cold War era toward avoiding human casualties in military operations as much as possible is seen in many countries and regions, regardless of political form. This is the result of a very complex intertwining of a wide range of factors, and it is difficult to examine in detail. However, even since the Cold War, ground wars and civil wars involving genocide have occurred in regions such as the former Yugoslavia and Sudan, and the enormous human losses in the Ukrainian war make it impossible to assert that the hurdles to the use of military force involving enormous human losses are universally increasing.

However, such ground wars with enormous human losses are caused by emotionally antagonistic factors between groups that are adjacent to each other and have complex religious, ethnic, and historical backgrounds. Consequently, the elements contributing to conflict are posited to diverge markedly from conventional notions of rationality. Nevertheless, when actors operate at a certain threshold of rationality and command alternative modalities for goal attainment, such as naval and aerial capabilities, they generally eschew terrestrial engagements in favor of minimizing human casualties. Therefore, the contention posited by Smith and Luttwak, that impediments to the utilization of military force entailing human casualties—exemplified by large-scale terrestrial combat—have progressively escalated since the mid-Cold War period, is widely acknowledged as a military axiom or prevailing tendency in the post-Cold War era.

As a result, the hurdles for the use of conventional forces, not to mention the use of nuclear weapons, are steadily growing, and they must undergo various legal and legitimacy reviews, including forging domestic consensus and demonstrating accountability to the international community. Deterrence in conventional forces was discussed in the previous section, and in light of the discussion in this section, it should be understood that the political and economic costs of the use of conventional forces have also risen significantly. For this reason, after nuclear forces, which cannot easily be used, stability and equilibrium are likely to occur even at the level of “high cost to use” conventional forces. Therefore, it is quite natural that non-military means with relatively low costs in comparison with purely military options, i.e., options in the field of economic sanctions and diplomacy, are used more frequently as a means of communication by rational actors.

3.8 Hurdle No. 2 in the Use of Military Force: Tyranny of Distance

If nuclear force exists only for deterrence, and if there are extremely high hurdles to its actual use, then conventional force necessarily constitutes the core of deterrence. If the use of military force is limited to the use of conventional forces, and if escalation

to nuclear weapons is basically impossible, it is an obvious fact that the amount of force that can be deployed is inversely proportional to the distance to the area of operation. This is often referred to as the “tyranny of distance,” and it is a crucial factor in the analysis and consideration of military strategy using conventional forces and in the execution of military operations.

Normally, when the enemy threat is high, the standard strategy is to preserve your forces away from your opponent’s area of strength and outrange them in order to limit damage to oneself. However, if the opponent has command and control communications network that includes reconnaissance satellites and high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft, as well as modern area denial capabilities such as long-range attack aircraft or cruise missiles, the range covered by advanced area denial exceeds 1000 km.⁸⁹ Therefore, in order to launch an offensive at the operational level against the area denial strategy at the theater level, a long-range precision-guided strike capability must be able to attack targets accurately and rapidly from long distances outside the area denial zone.

The farther the outranging distance, the greater the impact of the tyranny of distance, but this applies to conventional forces primarily and is not so much of a problem in the case of nuclear forces. For example, the U.S. Minuteman III ICBM has a total weight of less than 35 tons, but can carry a nuclear warhead equivalent to more than one million tons of TNT (three 335-kiloton nuclear warheads) over 13,000 km.⁹⁰ These ICBMs and SLBMs have a range that covers almost the entire global hemisphere from the U.S. mainland and surrounding waters, where they are out of the enemy’s threat range, and nuclear forces can project overwhelming force in a single strike from outside the opponent’s area denial capability. Modern ICBMs/SLBMs are basically multiple independently-targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs). Multiple warheads re-enter the atmosphere from the stratosphere and, accompanied by decoys, head toward their targets at speeds that are impossible to intercept. Since both sides possess strategic nuclear forces that can survive the first strike, a preemptive nuclear strike against an enemy possessing strategic nuclear weapons would almost certainly mean massive nuclear retaliation. Thus, nuclear deterrence will likely function in principle according to this mechanism of deterrence by punishment and mutual assured destruction (MAD).

On the other hand, the functioning of nuclear deterrence means that power projection can be carried out only by non-nuclear conventional forces, but there are natural limits to power projection by these forces. The tactical cruise missile Tomahawk, which the U.S. military frequently uses in power projection, can conduct precision-guided attacks on geographical coordinates by combining multiple guidance systems from a distance of around 1000 km. As shown in Table 3.3, its destructive power, if nuclear, reaches 200 kilotons in terms of TNT explosives, while that of conventional high explosion (HE) is only about 450 kg, or enough to destroy a small or medium-sized building and/or some vehicles. Therefore, the long-range precision-guided strike capability is extremely effective in pinpointing specific targets of attack, but in order to meet the quantitative requirements of large-scale power projection, hundreds or more expensive missiles must be expended, which imposes a heavy material and financial burden.

Table 3.3 Payloads of Tomahawk cruise missiles

	Nuclear warhead type (TLAM-N)	Anti-ship attack type	Conventional warhead type (TLAM-C/D)
Overall length	6.25 m	6.25 m	6.25 m
Width	0.52 m	0.52 m	0.52 m
Weight	1.452 kg	1.452 kg	1.452 kg
Bullet head	Single Warhead	Single Warhead	Single Warhead
Amount of explosives	200 kilotons of nuclear weapons	454 kg of high-performance explosives	Submunitions

Source Duncan Lennox, ed., *Jane's Strategic Weapon Systems*, Jane's Information Group, January 1999, Issue 29

“Tyranny of distance” is an important factor when nuclear deterrence functions and conventional forces are the center of gravity of military strategy. In order to achieve the required power projection, a strategy of forward deployment—while taking a certain level of risk within the opponent’s area denial capability—can be considered. Michael O’Hanlon discusses the costs and benefits of U.S. bases in Japan with regard to the forward deployment of U.S. forces in the Asia-Pacific theater. He concluded that a U.S. aircraft carrier based on Yokosuka as its de facto port of call is absolutely essential to the U.S. presence in the Asia-Pacific region, and that “to maintain a permanent aircraft carrier presence in the Western Pacific, for example, requires only those ships based in Japan. But to conduct it out of U.S. ports would require building and operating four more carrier battlegroups, which would increase costs to the United States of about \$10 billion a year.”⁹¹ This analysis provides a clear illustration of the direct impact of the “tyranny of distance” on power projection. For U.S. forces deployed in the Asia-Pacific, especially for continuous operation of naval and air assets require advanced repair and supply capabilities. And if maintenance and supply functions located in Japan cannot be expected, operational forces will need to return to Hawaii or the U.S. mainland across the Pacific. In such a case, the U.S. military would have to deploy several times its current level of commitment to the Asia-Pacific theater on a rotational basis from its home base, placing an extremely heavy financial and human burden on the U.S. military. According to O’Hanlon, the roles of U.S. forces in Japan are the “defense of Japan,” “regional hub for sending supplies for all military services from the United States to Korea and for servicing and repairing equipment,” “provide bases for U.S. combat operations in Korea, involving fighter and attack aircraft, ships and submarines patrolling,” “provide forward operating bases for U.S. force conducting; potential crisis involving China, and helping ensure access to the Malacca and Singapore Stratis,” and “provide a convenient and money-serving hub for U.S. operations in the Persian Gulf and other distant theaters.”⁹²

In order to achieve these strategic goals, the maintenance of base functions cannot be abandoned even if U.S. bases in Japan are vulnerable, being within the sphere

of influence of China's area denial. Therefore, securing the functions of U.S. bases in Japan while reducing risk as much as possible is indispensable for an offensive strategy based on the assumption that the U.S. military will project its forces in the event of a contingency. Reducing risk means denying the other side the ability to pursue area denial as much as possible, and it is necessary to protect the base functions as a foundation for projecting force and to secure sanctuary in operations. For this purpose, it is necessary to possess "the ability to pursue area denial and secure a sanctuary in order to prevent one's opponent from doing the same." In other words, power projection is no longer a prerequisite for sea control in the open ocean.

3.9 Is the "Offense-Defense" Dualism Valid?

Military affairs consist of complex and multilayered studies at the strategic, operational, tactical, and technological levels, and the considerations up to this point have included a wide variety of elements from the strategic level to the performance of individual missiles, assets, and other items. On the other hand, when discussing military strategy, the common theme is the "offense/defense dualism," in which one is offensive and the other is defensive. This is a very common concept used in analyzing military affairs, not only at the political and strategic level, but also at the operational and tactical levels. Van Evera attempts to construct a simple, but general theory that has a large range of applications to the major issues in international relations, namely, the likelihood of war and, in turn, what kind of interstate relations (or situation of the international community) or domestic situation tends to disrupt peace.

Van Evera divides interstate relations into two categories: "offense dominant," in which conquest of the other country is relatively easy, and "defense dominant," in which conquest of territory is extremely difficult.⁹³ He argues that this "offense-defense balance" has a significant impact on the risk of outbreak of war, and he makes the following three points as major hypotheses in the "offense-defense theory."⁹⁴

- (1) War will be more common in periods when conquest is easy or is believed easy, less common when conquest is difficult or is believed difficult.
- (2) States that have or believe they have large offensive opportunities or defensive vulnerabilities will initiate and fight more wars than other states.
- (3) A state will initiate and fight more wars in periods when it has, or thinks that it has, larger offensive opportunities and defensive capabilities.

Generally, when discussing military and security issues, whether at the national policy level or with regard to the nature of weapons, it is often the case that they are discussed in terms of "offense vs. defense" arguments. However, the relationship between offense and defense frequently changes during different phases of a war, and it is not unusual for a country to be on the offensive at the operational level even if it is on the defensive at the strategic level. For example, in the aforementioned Air-Land Battle scenario, the Warsaw Pact forces with superior land forces such as armored divisions attacked first, while the NATO side, initially on the defensive, waited until

the logistical lines of the Warsaw Pact forces were fully extended, and conducted an offensive air attack in depth, and so on. Although the war envisioned was a defensive one at the strategic level, stemming from a land invasion by the Warsaw Pact side, the operational concept was mainly an offensive one, with air attacks on a wide area within the war zone, including the territory of the Warsaw Pact side.

This analytical framework of offense-defense will become even more complex in the future. Since the latter half of the twentieth century, the operational tempo has been accelerated by technological innovation, and even if we analyze the military from the viewpoint of offense-defense, the conclusion may vary depending on the strategic, theater, the operational levels. As discussed in Chap. 1, modern military strategy should not be understood in terms of a simple structure in which the superior side takes the offensive, controlling the sea and projecting its forces, while the inferior side takes the defensive and chooses area denial. Modern area denial is capable of controlling the oceans at the theater level.

In addition, Van Evera’s three hypotheses all rely heavily on the level of awareness of political leaders, and it is difficult to reflect them in the analysis of force building and military strategy. Since most of the various assets (combatant vessels, aircraft, missile systems, etc.) can be used both offensively and defensively, depending on their operational position and usage, it is not appropriate to simply define them as offensive or defensive.

It is also important to note that, unlike economic power or industrial might, military strength does not decrease in value by not being used. Waltz states that “possession of power should not be identified with the use of force, and the usefulness of force should not be confused with its usability.”⁹⁵ Waltz’s view on the utility of military power suggests the importance of analyzing military power and military strategy from multiple perspectives, including deterrence and others, and means that the military cannot be spoken of simply in terms of numerical and qualitative superiority or inferiority and the prospect of victory or defeat.

In other words, the reason for the existence and role of military power must be examined comprehensively in light of various conditions necessary for discussing contemporary military strategy, such as the concept of deterrence, which was refined with the advent of nuclear weapons. It is not appropriate to analyze military strategy based on an assessment of whether or not it resulted in an attack, or whether it was offensive or defensive in a particular phase. To add, Van Evera attempts to prove the three hypotheses in the “offense-defense theory” by means of three case studies: modern and contemporary Europe since 1789 (French Revolution), ancient China during the Spring and Autumn to Warring States eras, and the United States since 1789.⁹⁶ However, even if the theory has generality, it lacks applicability because it is constructed without considering not only the composition of military forces such as nuclear weapons and information technology, but also the historical background, social system, and all other factors. This is the type of theory of which George and Bennett were highly critical in Chap. 2. Namely, that a highly general and abstract so-called “general theory” does not contribute much to specific policy-making and cannot be said to contribute to empirical strategic analysis.⁹⁷

3.10 Sub-conclusion: Main Issues Identified Thus Far

So far, we have mainly analyzed the theoretical level and clarified the validity of the analytical framework of area denial, sea control, and power projection. In doing so, we have identified various issues that will affect future case studies and evaluations based on them, which are summarized in the following six items. Some of the major findings are not limited to the purely military realm but are also elements that can affect international relations and the international system.

3.10.1 Difficulty of Power Projection

In the past, in the maritime domain, the superior side would take the offensive by power projection based on sea control, while the inferior side would employ area denial. The feasibility of power projection is decreasing because the probability of achieving the strategic objective is decreasing and the expected scale of damage is expected to reach unacceptable levels.

This is related to the aforementioned “hurdle for the use of military force,” and even if the United States and its allies possess sea control that could be exploited against a strong area denial such as the Soviet Union’s maritime denial strategy at the end of the Cold War or China’s A2/AD strategy in the twenty-first century, the possibility of using large-scale power projection to the Soviet Union or mainland China is basically non-existent. This is not only because of the need to prevent nuclear escalation, but also because the damage that would be inflicted in eliminating such a strong area denial, which is geographically spread vertically from the coast to the interior, would not be at an acceptable level, and there is no reasonable probability that the power projection would be successful in the first place.

3.10.2 Tyranny of Distance

As long as nuclear deterrence is functioning, in the case of outranging the scope of power projection in conventional weapons due to area denial, the “tyranny of distance” significantly reduces that efficiency. In order to confront the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War, it was unacceptable for the United States to conduct large-scale operations without forward-deployed bases in Europe and Japan, due to its huge const. For the same reason, the bases in Japan are essential for the United States to confront China in Asia in the twenty-first century.

3.10.3 Mutual Area Denial

If it is difficult to achieve one's own sea control, the second best strategy is to pursue area denial to limit one's opponent's freedom of action, denying the enemy its ability to pursue area denial. Consequently, this engenders a circumstance where "neither party retains freedom of action," thereby creating what may be termed a maritime no-man's land within the boundary zone subject to reciprocal area denial strategies.

This is evidenced by the fact that, as shown in Sects. 3.2 and 3.3 of this chapter, Japan, which is geographically located within the sphere of influence of the then-Soviet Union and today's China, in response to their area denial, prioritized increasing the residual value of assets and base functions located in Japan by improving its own area denial rather than seeking to possess power projection alongside the United States.

As will be shown in detail in this chapter, several prominent studies on America's counterstrategy against China's A2/AD strategy also emphasize effective denial strategies rather than relying on power projection as in the past.

3.10.4 The "Stability-Instability Paradox" and the Stalemate in the Maritime Domain

Based on "3.10.3" above, we know that in areas where the spheres of influence of actors with powerful military forces in the maritime domain overlap, they will mutually exercise area denial. Although area denial is effective for preventing one's opponent from moving in closer, it has little power to force one's opponent's hand or otherwise change the status quo to achieve one's own strategic objectives.

Thus, the contemporary maritime domain creates a "stalemate" in which it is extremely difficult to alter the situation, and the probability of achieving political or strategic objectives is extremely low even if a transition to high-intensity conventional war is made. This means that in addition to the recognition that each actor is oriented toward avoiding escalation to nuclear war due to the failure of nuclear deterrence, the probability of achieving strategic objectives with conventional forces is greatly reduced, which in turn reduces the possibility of launching a high-intensity conventional war in the first place. Accordingly, deterrence is firm and effective at the juncture of high-intensity conventional warfare, and the elevation of the threshold for the deployment of military force perpetuates prolonged standoffs and low-intensity confrontation/conflicts.

This situation is called the "stability-instability paradox," in which deterrence functions at the higher rungs of the escalation ladder, and when equilibrium is achieved, there is a level of confidence that the situation will not escalate any further, which in turn triggers instability at the lower rungs of the ladder.⁹⁸ Snyder stated that "in the strategic literature, the greater the stability of the 'strategic' balance of terror, the lower the stability of the overall balance at its lower levels of violence."⁹⁹

The implication is that during the Cold War, the hurdles that might have prevented conventional wars such as the Korean War, Vietnam War, or the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, were lower because the balance and deterrence mechanisms at the nuclear strategic level were solid.¹⁰⁰

Applying this argument to the context of this book, especially the post-Cold War situation, the stability of the nuclear and high-intensity conventional war levels (the conviction of each actor that some confrontation or conflict would not escalate into a nuclear or high-intensity conventional war between the major powers) means that low-intensity confrontation and conflict will remain the central security issue for the foreseeable future.

3.10.5 Sea Control amid Globalization

Even when the assumptions made in this book are taken into account and contemporary sea power is examined, theories such as Mahan's concept of sea control have a certain level of usefulness. First of all, there is no problem in asserting that it is a universal argument to some extent that actors dependent on maritime trade need to maintain sea control capabilities in order to maintain and expand their national interests. In fact, this argument becomes more persuasive with the process of globalization. As will be shown in more detail in the respective case studies, India and China, which used to be more like land powers, have increased their investment in sea control in the process of their economic development in the global economic system.

3.10.6 Sea Control and Self-contained Naval Power

In the open seas outside the area denial zone, support by land-based air power etc. cannot be fully expected. As a result, in order to demonstrate military superiority in the open seas such as the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans, self-contained naval forces represented by aircraft carrier strike groups are essential, and in this area, pure naval power determines superiority in sea control.

Notes

1. Elinor Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy: An Introduction*, Routledge, 2012, p. 16. 2015).
2. Since the early modern period, when examining the boundary between the territorial waters, which is the area within the jurisdiction of a state, and the high seas, which do not belong to a particular state, the issue has been "whether or not the land is under the control" of the state. As a result, for a long time, the prevailing view was that the territorial waters were three nautical miles (about 5.5 km) from the coast. This theory is called the "distance of

- impact theory” concerning the territorial waters and is based on the idea that “power on land is exhausted at the point where military strength is exhausted.” See Shimada Yukio, “19 Seiki ni okeru Ryōkai no Fukuin Mondai ni Tsuite (On the Width Problem of the Territorial Waters in the 19th Century),” *Waseda Hōgaku* (Waseda Law Review), Vol. 83, No. 3, 2008, p. 44.
3. Alfred Mahan, *Naval Strategy*, Little Brown, 1911, p. 435.
 4. Julian Corbett, *Principles of Maritime Strategy*, Dover Publications, 2004, p.89.
 5. *Ibid.*, p.235..
 6. James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, *Chinese Naval Strategy in the 21st Century: The Turn to Mahan*, Routledge, 2008, p. 5. Subsequently, Holmes and Yoshihara published a paper in which they state, “In recent years, the Chinese navy has adopted both Mahan and Corbett’s theories,” and also mention that “At the U.S. Naval War College we often ask students whether they consider themselves Mahanian or Corbettian.” See James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, “China’s Navy: A Turn to Corbett?” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, Vol. 135, No. 12 (December 2010), p. 44.
 7. John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiring into the History of the Cold War*, Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 232.
 8. *Ibid.*, p. 233.
 9. Andrew Krepinevich, “Cavalry to Computer: The Pattern of Military Revolutions,” *The National Interest*, No. 37 (Fall 1994).
 10. Sergei Gorshkov, *Gorushikofu Roshia-Soren Kaigun Senryaku* (On Gorshkov’s Russo-Soviet Naval Strategy), translated by Kuniko Miyauchi, Hara Shobō, 2010, p. 3.
 11. *Ibid.*, pp. 248–249.
 12. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
 13. Roger Barnett, “Soviet Maritime Strategy,” in Colin Gray and Roger Barnett, eds., *Seapower and Strategy*, U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1989, p. 314.
 14. *Ibid.*, pp. 319–320.
 15. Shingo Yoshida, “‘51 Taikō’ Shita no Bōeiryoku Seibi: Shiireen Bōei o Chūshin ni (Defense Force Development under the ‘51 Outline’: Focusing on Sea Lane Defense, 1977–1987),” *Kokusai Anzen Hoshō*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (December 2016), p. 37.
 16. Michael McGeorge, *Military Objectives in Soviet Foreign Policy*, The Brookings Institution, 1987, p. 171.
 17. As a result, according to Sam Tangredi, in the mid-Cold War, the United States and its allies needed to implement area denial against Soviet submarine advances, which he describes as “anti-access” by the United States and United Kingdom. See Sam Tangredi, *Anti-access Warfare: Countering A2/AD Strategies*, Naval Institute Press, 2013, p. 37.
 18. “National Defense Program Outline,” National Defense Council Decision of October 29, 1976, Cabinet Decision of the same day, paragraph 3.
 19. Yoshida, “‘51 Taikō,’” p. 37.
 20. Defense Agency, *Defense White Paper 1986*, Ministry of Finance Printing Bureau, August 1986, pp. 123, 134; and *Defense White Paper 1988*, September 1988, p. 123.
 21. At the time, Japan and the United States were discussing the possibility of a ground invasion of the northern tip of Hokkaido by the Soviet Union for the purpose of controlling Soya and Tsugaru Straits mainly for the sake of its maritime fortification strategy. Shigeki Nishimura, “Nihon no Bōei Senryaku o Kangaeru: Gurōbaru-Apurōchi ni yoru Hoppō Zenpō Bōeiron (Considering Japan’s Defense Strategy: A Global Approach to Northern Frontier Defense),” *Shin Bōei Ronbunshū*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1984), p. 63.
 22. Yoshida, “‘51 Taikō,’” p. 39.
 23. Roger Cliff, Mark Burles, Michael Chase, Derek Eaton, and Kevin L. Pollpeter, *Entering Dragon’s Lair: Chinese Antiaccess Strategies and Their Implications for the United States*, RAND, 2007, pp. 27–28.
 24. *Ibid.*, pp.21–22. The report states that the term “high technology” came into official use in the PLA in the wake of the Gulf War.
 25. Air-Sea Battle Office, *Air-Sea Battle: Service Collaboration to Address Anti-Access & Area Denial Challenges*, May 2013, p. 2.

26. The analysis was initially an unpublished document within the Net Assessment Bureau. See Andrew Krepinovich and Barry Watts, *The Last Warrior: Andrew Marshall and the Shaping of Modern American Defense Strategy*, Basic Books, 2015, pp. 208–209.
27. Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle*, p. 13.
28. U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China*, 2010.
29. Ministry of Defense of Japan, 2013, p. 8.
30. As will be explained in detail in Chap. 8, China's area denial of territory corresponds to its strategic objective of countering the conventional forces of Japan and the United States, which are militarily inferior, and not all of the PLA's military strategies in the maritime domain correspond to area denial. Since around 2012, in response to its maritime expansion in the South China Sea, the "PLA Navy" (hereafter referred to as the "Chinese navy") Thus it can be concluded that the PLA Navy is implementing maritime control in the South China Sea region against neighboring countries in the South China Sea, including ASEAN countries.
31. Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle*, pp. 73–104.
32. Ibid, pp. 105–132.
33. Ibid, p. 117.
34. Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660–1783 Twelfth Edition*, 1918, Little Brown, pp. 25–26.
35. Ibid, p. 28.
36. Ibid, p.89.
37. (Japanese translation) Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660–1783*, translated by Kitamura Kenichi, Hara Shobo, 1982, translator's commentary, p. 9.
38. The English phrases "command of the sea," and "sea control," are not always defined in a certain way. Geoffrey Till, *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century Revised and Updated Third Edition*, Routledge, 2013, p. 150.
39. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, p. 539.
40. Mahan, *Naval Strategy*, pp. 279, 152.
41. Ibid, p. 5.
42. Gray, *Modern Strategy*, pp. 217, 220.
43. Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy*, p. 8.
44. Gray, *Modern Strategy*, p. 221.
45. Julian Corbett, *Principles of Maritime Strategy*, Dover Publications, 2004, p. 87. (Reprinted in *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, by Longmans, 1911).
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid, p. 168.
48. Ibid, p. 235.
49. However, as Mahan argues, "this particular differentiation of naval strategy is due to the unsettled conditions or politically weak conditions of the regions to which navies give access, which armies can reach only by means of navies, and in which the operations of an army, if attempted, depend upon control of the sea," it can be considered that Mahan did not consider military operations to be completed by naval actions in the maritime domain, but focused his discussion only on the part of military strategy that was completed in the maritime domain. Mahan, *Naval Strategy*, p. 122.
50. Corbett, *Principles of Maritime Strategy*, p. 13.
51. Even if we were to discuss the strategy of a single military type, the modern "naval strategy," the refusal of naval power to project invading forces from the open sea, such as long-range cruise missiles, can have an impact at the theater level, and the discussion should not be completed with a dualistic theory of sea control and power projection.
52. Ken Booth, *Navies and Foreign Policy*, Routledge, 2014, pp. 20–21.
53. Ibid, p. 17.
54. U.K. Ministry of Defence, *Joint Doctrine Publication 0–10: British Maritime Doctrine*, pp. 2–7.

55. Edward Luttwak, *The Political Uses of Sea Power*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974, p. 1.
56. Ibid, p. 38.
57. Ibid, pp. 11–38.
58. Stansfield Turner, “Missions of the U.S. Navy,” *U.S. Naval War College Review*, Vol. XXVI, Number 5 (March–April 1974), p. 2.
59. Ibid, p. 4.
60. U.S. Department of the Navy, Marine Corps, and U.S. Coast Guard, *A Cooperative Strategy for the 21st Century Seapower*, March 2015, pp. 33–36. The document of the same name was originally published in 2007, and since this is a revised version of that document, the 2007 version is referred to in this book as “CS21” and the 2015 revised version as “CS21Revised”.
61. Luttwak, *The Political Uses of Sea Power*, pp. 41–43.
62. Ibid, p. 41.
63. Ibid, pp. 41–42.
64. The result is that Aegis combat system-equipped destroyers capable of withstanding high-intensity conventional warfare can be converted to a wide range of uses, including political presence through peacetime “freedom of navigation operations” and the like.
65. Robert Manning, *The Future of U.S. Extended Deterrence in Asia to 2025*, Atlantic Council, Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security, October 2014, Executive Summary.
66. Ibid.
67. “Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation,” April 27, 2015, p. 1.
68. The Eisenhower administration prioritized a strategy of mass retaliation with nuclear forces, reduced the size of the army, and in principle left other conventional forces in place. The Kennedy administration, on the other hand, emphasized the build-up of conventional forces, and in fact relied on conventional forces for military reactions during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Robert Slusser, “The Berlin Crises of 1958–59 and 1961,” in Barry Blechman, et. al., *Force without War: U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument*, The Brookings Institution, 1978, p. 435.
69. Freedman, “The First Two Generations of Nuclear Strategists,” p. 748.
70. Glenn Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense: Toward A Theory of National Security*, Princeton University Press, 1961, p. 15.
71. Freedman, “The First Two Generations of Nuclear Strategists,” p. 738.
72. U.S. Department of Defense, “Statement of Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird on the FY 1972–76 Defense Program and the 1972 Defense Budget,” pp. 155, 157.
73. John Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, Cornell University Press, 1983.
74. Ibid, p. 188.
75. Ibid, pp. 14–15, 200–201.
76. The operational concept that the offset strategy spawned was the “Air-Land Battle Concept,” which proved its effectiveness in the Gulf War; Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, The Defense Innovation Initiative, November 15, 2014, p. 2; Robert Martinage, *Toward A New Offset Strategy: Exploiting U.S. Long-Term Advantages to Restore U.S. Global Power Projection Capability*, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2014, pp. 13–16.
77. U.K. Secretary of State for Defence, *Strategic Defence Review*, July 1998, Supporting Essay Five, Paragraph 2.
78. Sloan argues that “perhaps the most visible change was that the United States and its allies no longer had the luxury of being able to focus on just one large threat.” See Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy*, p. 59.
79. Lawrence Freedman, *Deterrence*, Polity Press, 2004, p. 24.
80. “Nuclear Triad” were reverted to “long-range bombers, ICBMs, and SLBMs” in the NPR 2010. U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, “Nuclear Posture Review Foreword,” January 8, 2002.
81. Rumsfeld, “Nuclear Posture Review Foreword.”
82. Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy*, p. 61.
83. U.K. Secretary of State for Defence, *Strategic Defence Review*, Chap. 1, Paragraph 11.

84. Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, Penguin Books, 2006, pp. 292–297.
85. DSG is a common name; the official name of the document is: U.S. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, January 2012, p. 6.; U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report 2014*, March 4, 2014, p. VII.
86. Edward Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace, Revised and Enlarged Edition*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001, p. 68.
87. Luttwak, *Strategy*, pp. 70–71.
88. Ibid.
89. Cliff, et al., *Entering Dragon's Lair*, pp. 111–112.
90. Duncan Lennox, ed., *Jane's Strategic Weapon Systems*, Jane's Information Group, January 1999, Issue 29.
91. Michael O'Hanlon, "Restructuring U.S. Forces and Bases in Japan," in Mike Mochizuki, ed., *Toward a True Alliance*, Brookings Institution Press, 1997, p. 151.
92. Ibid, pp. 156–157.
93. Stephen Van Evera, "Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War," Michael Brown, et al. eds., *Theories of War and Peace*, The MIT Press, 1998, pp. 55–57. (First published in *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Spring 1998).
94. Ibid, p. 72.
95. Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Waveland Press, 2010, p. 185.
96. Van Evera, "Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War," pp. 72–73.
97. Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, MIT Press, 2005, p. 7.
98. An escalation ladder is an image of a vertical ladder of levels of escalation of a situation or specific scenario. See Herman Kahn, *On Escalation: Metaphors and Scenarios*, Frederick A. Praeger, 1965, p. 39.
99. Glenn Snyder, "The Balance of Power and the Balance of Terror," in Paul Seabury, ed., *Balance of Power*, Chandler Publishing Company, 1965, pp. 198–199.
100. Masahiro Kurita, who uses a looser definition of this concept in today's East Asian context, argues that "the expansion of the nuclear capability of a state that intends to change the status quo establishes mutual nuclear deterrence between that state and the United States, which provides extended nuclear deterrence to East Asian states, but also facilitates the escalation stage, i.e., provocative actions at a lower level of the escalation ladder, such as invasion of territorial waters by paramilitary groups, or a military attack with a limited damage. This is a theory that provocative actions at a lower level of the escalation ladder, such as an invasion of territorial waters by a paramilitary group or a military attack that is a one-time event and causes limited damage, are more likely to occur...Provocative actions at lower levels are not the result of a shaking of the reliability of deterrence at higher levels of the escalation ladder. Rather, stability has been established at the higher levels of the escalation ladder, allowing those who seek to change the status quo to carry out their actions at those lower levels without much danger of escalation." Masahiro Kurita, "Dōmei to Yokushi: Shūdanteki Jieiken Giron no Zentei to Shite (Alliance and Deterrence: As a Precondition for Discussion of Collective Self-Defense)," *Reference*, March 2015, p. 21.

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Chapter 4

Deciphering the Maritime Strategies of Maritime Nations



Chapter 3 explained the validity of the three analytical frameworks of military strategy in the maritime domain: area denial, sea control, and power projection. The chapter elucidates not only the cogency of this perspective but also establishes that the fulcrum of contemporary military strategy is situated within conventional forces. It further articulates that, post-Cold War, the thresholds for deploying large-scale military might have reached exceedingly elevated levels. Additionally, it accentuates the tyranny of distance as a principal element in the formulation of current military stratagem.

Based on the results of the theoretical analysis up to this point, Part II will analyze the evolution of military strategies in the maritime domain for the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan, which are generally regarded as “sea powers.” As an example, the United States and the United Kingdom have not had any imminent threats in the maritime domain near their countries since the end of the Cold War, so they have not been allocating resources intentionally for area denial. Japan, however, has made a considerable investment in area denial in response to the Soviet Union since the end of the Cold War and China since around 2010.

As previously noted, the military strategy of a given nation is shaped not solely by its unique geographic, historical, political, economic, industrial, and technological context but also by the strategic choices of allied nations, states with amicable relations, and other nations it deems as potential threats. This interplay of military strategies, in turn, exerts a reciprocal influence on the strategic calculus of other countries. It is not easy to comprehensively explain the situation based on a causal inference model that simply presents a one-way arrow diagram.

Furthermore, the analytical framework of area denial, sea control, and power projection presented in this book is not a simple one in which superiority or inferiority can be derived from a uniform comparison of the number of specific assets possessed or procured. First of all, in instances where the technical specifications of a fighter aircraft, including maximum velocity and armament capacity, are ostensibly

Table 4.1 Major assets in the maritime domain and their classification based on their operational characteristics

Asset	Area denial	Sea control	Power projection
Attack nuclear submarine (SSN) ¹	++	+++	+
Conventional submarine (SS)	+++	+	+
Aircraft carrier ^a (CTOL)	++	+++	+++
Light aircraft carrier ^b (STOVL, STOBAR)	++	++	–
Large surface combatants (cruisers, destroyers, frigates)	+	+++	++
Landing vessel	–	–	+++
Land-based long-range attack aircraft ^c	+++	++	NA
Land-based interceptor	+++	+	NA
Air defense missile system	+++	+	NA
Cruise/ballistic missile systems for anti-ship attack (land-based)	+++	+	–

+++ : optimal, ++ : compatible, + : partially compatible, – : incompatible, NA : not covered by the analysis of this book

^aRefers to “conventional take-off and landing” (CTOL) aircraft carriers that use catapults to launch their onboard aircraft. Carriers of the U.S. Navy and the Charles de Gaulle of the French Navy are examples

^b“short take-off and vertical landing” (STOVL), in which the ship is launched from a ski jump deck and landed vertically, as in the case of the Invincible-class light aircraft carriers owned by the United Kingdom. The “short take-off but arrested recovery” (STOBAR) aircraft carriers operated by aircraft carriers, Russia, and China, which depart from the ski jump deck and are detained for landing by an arresting wire.

^cThis book is an analysis of military strategy in the maritime domain and excludes cases in which forces are projected directly from the land domain to other countries, i.e., land attacks by land-based long-range attack aircraft and the like

Source Prepared by the author

similar as per catalogued data, a significant distinction emerges between their operation within a networked operational context, underpinned by sophisticated technologies such as Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Targeting (C4ISRT) systems, and their utilization in an isolated environment devoid of integrated information and communication platforms, such as early warning aircraft or terrestrial radar installations. Therefore, a uniform comparison based on the number of specific weapons possessed would rather hinder an accurate understanding of capabilities and intentions.

In addition, many assets are used in different ways depending on the operational concept of the country possessing them, and so case studies should be conducted carefully for each country. The main assets to be compared in the case studies in this chapter and the following chapters are classified in principle according to the three analytical frameworks of area denial, sea control, and power projection, as shown in Table 4.1. However, not all these categories can be applied as they are, and a detailed examination of each country will be held in the case studies.

For example, in the United States, nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) are used not only to attack enemy strategic submarines or to attack the Soviet fleet, but also as a component of carrier strike groups (CSGs), which patrol the forward range of aircraft carriers, so to speak. The SSNs are also a component of power projection. On the other hand, British attack submarines in the Falklands Conflict and attack submarines in India, which potentially were opposed to the United States in the late Cold War, can be classified as area denial assets that impede the actions of enemy surface forces. Furthermore, in Russia, attack submarines are thought to have had the primary mission of area denial by intercepting U.S. surface fleets approaching their own territory, as well as tracking and attacking U.S. strategic submarines.

Large surface vessels, such as missile destroyers, are basically intended for sea control, but when they operate land attack cruise missiles, etc., they fall into the category of power projection. In addition, as mentioned in Chap. 1, it can be understood that the Soviet Union considered large surface vessels as an area denial asset in carrying out its “maritime bastion strategy” in the latter stages of the Cold War. However, if the enemy has the freedom to use the sea, surface vessels cannot be considered an efficient asset in the execution of area denial in view of their vulnerability and ability to survive. In addition, a conventional aircraft carrier is used to eliminate trans-oceanic threats by operating air defense fighters and to secure freedom of action in the area of operations. In such cases it is a component of sea control, and it is also the main asset for power projection along with the ground attack capability of its on-board attack aircraft.

In this study, large surface combatant ships are defined as those with 3,000 full-load displacement tons or more. This is because a certain degree of hull size is necessary to have the ability to conduct long-term operations in the open seas and to maintain a certain degree of survivability in high-intensity combat through air defense and anti-ship strike capabilities.

Thus, when analyzing the military strategy as an output, it is necessary to abandon for the time being the policy process of each country and proceed with a careful discussion, taking into consideration the historical background of each country, its geographical location, the operational methods of the assets that constitute its military power, and its command and communications capabilities, which are difficult to express in numerical terms. The case studies in Parts II and III are comparative analyses based on the methods considered most appropriate for understanding the military strategy of each nation in its maritime domain. The specific period to be analyzed is from around 1980 to 2023, but the historical background of each country should be discussed more broadly than the period covered, to the extent deemed necessary.

The case studies for each country follow the evaluation scale in Table 4.2 and ratings are provided according to the analytical framework of area denial, sea control, and power projection. Since the factors and timing of major changes in strategic objectives differ from country to country, each of the six countries is classified separately regarding the timing.

The evaluation scale is indicated on a 5-point scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest. However, some items are considered to be in a transitional stage of evaluation

Table 4.2 Evaluation scale

5	It excels in high-intensity conventional warfare and has the power to eliminate the military challenge of any other state
4	It is highly capable in high-intensity conventional warfare and is in a situation where it is competing for military superiority with other major countries
3	It can respond to some degree to high-intensity conventional warfare, but only to the extent that this is geographically limited or complements such capabilities possessed by other allies
2	It is limited in its ability to respond to low-intensity conflicts and is not capable of conducting high-intensity conventional warfare
1	The company has little or no such capacity

Source Prepared by the author

and may be indicated as “2 ⇒ 3” when it is difficult to indicate them with a single number.

Note

1. This item involves both “attack nuclear-powered submarine” (SSN) and “cruise missile nuclear-powered submarine” (SSGN).

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Chapter 5

The Maritime Strategy of the United States: Dependence on Sea Control and Power Projection



Contents

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Following World War II, the United States inherited military superiority in the maritime domain from the United Kingdom and roughly speaking, it is no exaggeration to say that the United States has consistently maintained military supremacy over most of the world’s oceans since then. However, around the middle of the Cold War, the U.S. Navy came to be challenged by the Soviet Union in both mass and quantity in terms of maritime military power. At that time, the U.S. Navy focused primarily on sea control. On the other hand, even at the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union’s overseas bases were limited in terms of both number and capacity, and its open-sea deployment capability was partial in comparison to that of the United States. Therefore, the relative military superiority of the United States was generally maintained in the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, and the areas where the Soviets could compete with the United States for sea control were limited to a certain range from their own territory. In addition, from the end of the Cold War until China’s military development became apparent, there were no states or non-state actors that challenged the United States in the maritime domain. For this reason, for about a quarter of a century since the end of the Cold War, U.S. military strategy in the maritime domain has in principle prioritized power projection based on its own sea control. The ability to project force is a strategy for the United States to maintain the world order as the sole superpower and to realize its national strategy of involvement with other nations based on the political normative concepts of freedom and democracy.

On the other hand, by around 2010, China established its anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) strategy, which is a military strategy mainly focused on area denial in order to locally disrupt U.S. military power in the Asia-Pacific theater. China has gradually been improving its ability to project forces, through assault and landing capabilities, while establishing sea control in the South China Sea against the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, which have overwhelming military superiority. Therefore, a situation has arisen in which the United States must establish countermeasures against advanced area denial and, with China in mind, demonstrate power projection and reestablish sea control as major strategic objectives.

It is pertinent to recognize that, throughout the temporal scope of this analysis, the strategic imperatives of the United States' maritime military strategy have been predicated on a bifurcated approach. This entails an evaluative determination to prioritize either maritime dominion or power projection in response to the evolving dynamics of the security environment. Geographically, on the other hand, the United States is isolated from other major powers by the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, and there are no states in the vicinity that could pose a military threat, so there has been little need to emphasize area denial throughout its history. Early warning and air defense capabilities were extremely important in Alaska and other areas in the context of nuclear deterrence in the face of the Soviets during the Cold War. Even after the end of the Cold War, ballistic missile defense systems (BMDs) have been developed with the emergence of the potential threat of ballistic missiles by North Korea and other countries, but this should in principle be understood in the context directly related to nuclear deterrence; it cannot be said that the United States has emphasized area denial in situations related to high-intensity conventional warfare at sea, which this book covers.

Table 5.1 shows the changes in the number of major U.S. Navy ships by five-year periods from 1985 to 2020.¹ Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a general downward trend in all ship types, mainly due to budget cuts associated with the end of the Cold War, as well as rising costs associated with technological innovation. That there has been no significant change in the percentage or composition of mainline vessels in the fleet and that the overall number of them has decreased indicate that no major strategic shift has been made.

From the Cold War to the present, the United States has had to protect forward-deployed bases scattered around the world, and for protecting these bases, area denial is a necessary element. However, this too depends on the allies where the bases are located, and the ratio of assets that can constitute area denial in the scale and capability of the U.S. military is remarkably small, along with that of the United Kingdom, which will be discussed later. Therefore, it is difficult to imagine that the United States itself has actively invested in area denial, in the sense of projecting power from its own territory and coastal waters to the open sea in order to eliminate incoming enemies, at the military-strategic level. For example, since the 1950s the United States has not built a conventional-powered (diesel battery-propelled) submarine, a typical area denial asset that is quiet and suitable for choke point defense. As for air force assets, it can be said that the percentage of investment in air defense fighters is small compared to other countries. Based on these points, I will discuss the United States

Table 5.1 Changes in the number of major U.S. navy vessels

Type of ships	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Attack nuclear submarine, etc	95	90	82	55	56	57	59	53
Conventional submarine	4	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Aircraft carrier	14	14	12	12	12	11	10	11
Large surface combatants (battleships, cruisers, destroyers, frigates)	200	206	127	114	106	101	95	110
Amphibious ships	61	65	41	41	38	31	31	32

Source Prepared by author from the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance 1985–1986*, Autumn 1985, pp. 9–11; *The Military Balance 1990–1991*, Autumn 1990, pp. 19–22; *The Military Balance 1995–1996*, October 1995, pp. 25–28; *The Military Balance 2000–2001*, October 2000, pp. 26–29; *The Military Balance Autumn 1990*, pp. 19–22; *The Military Balance 1995–1996*, October 1995, pp. 25–28; *The Military Balance 2000–2001*, October 2000, pp. 26–29; *The Military Balance 2005–2006*, October 2005, pp. 22–26; *The Military Balance 2010*, February 2010, pp. 33–36; *The Military Balance 2015*, February 2015, pp. 43–46; and *The Military Balance 2020*, February 2020, pp. 49–50
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in three sections: the end of the Cold War, when priority was given to sea control; the post-Cold War period, when the United States specialized in power projection; and the period of reinvestment in sea control due to the rise of China.

5.1 The Rise of the Soviet Navy and the Emphasis on Sea Control: The Late Cold War (1980–1989)

As noted in Chap. 2, Admiral Stansfield Turner, then President of the U.S. Naval War College, described four primary roles of the U.S. Navy: “strategic deterrence,” “sea control,” “projection of power ashore,” and “naval presence.”² Regarding these four terms, Vice Admiral Turner argued that “the Chief of Naval Operations has established the Navy’s role and ‘raison d’etre’ to be four mission areas,” adding that these four terms “may seem to be just a new jargon. Not so. Since 1970 there has been a redefinition of traditional U.S. naval roles and missions.”³ This indicates that this was not merely an expression of Turner’s personal views, but part of an authoritative explanation of strategy within the U.S. Navy at the time. According to Peter Swartz, Turner’s writing was based on *Project Sixty*, an official/secret strategic document on U.S. naval strategy initiated by Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, then Chief of Naval Operations, in 1970, from which classified information was redacted.⁴ Incidentally, this method of “sanitizing” highly classified content to make it widely public and using it as a tool for strategic communication globally is a popular method in the formulation of strategic documents in many countries.

Swartz noted that *Project Sixty* was to reorient the U.S. Navy to counter the Soviet's threat and consisted of four missions that could respond to both high and low escalation ladders (high-low mix), from the nuclear deterrence level (strategic deterrence) to peacetime (presence), and it prioritized sea control over power projection.⁵ This was due to the fact that the Soviet navy at the time was rapidly increasing its "blue-water navy" capabilities through improvements in both mass and quantity, including submarines and large surface vessels, so it was necessary to emphasize sea control to counter these improvements. In addition, since the strategic goal was to maintain the status quo by maintaining deterrence at the nuclear strategic level, large-scale power projection into Soviet land areas was not a realistic mission if nuclear escalation was to be considered. In other words, between nations where mutually assured destruction has been established, the projection of large-scale conventional forces against an opponent is not a practical option. The same is true of U.S.-China relations in the twenty-first century and of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-Russia relations in the war in Ukraine.

The basic trend of countering the Soviet Union's expansion of its capabilities in the maritime domain and the accompanying emphasis on sea control was maintained in principle from *Project Sixty* through to the *Strategic Concept of the U.S. Navy* and *Sea Plan 2000* formulated toward the end of the 1970s, which was then succeeded by the *Maritime Strategy* in the 1980s.⁶

As previously discussed, at the end of the Cold War, the Soviet navy pursued a sea bastion strategy, establishing a sea denial area within about 2000 km of its coastline to provide a sanctuary where strategic nuclear submarines, the second-strike capability in nuclear deterrence, could safely engage in strategic patrols. Therefore, it was believed that the Soviet navy placed the highest priority on the protection of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), followed by the support of surface warfare in the European theater and the interdiction of Western sea lines of communication in the open sea.⁷

While the Soviet navy maintained its superiority in maintaining elastic defense through its sea bastion strategy and in theater-level nuclear forces, as well as in anti-surface warfare and mine warfare, it had weaknesses in its air operation capabilities outside the range of its surface air power, anti-submarine warfare, and anti-ship missile defense. Furthermore, its forces were dispersed east and west across the Eurasian continent and were blocked by choke points such as the Bosphorus Strait and the Sōya/Tsugaru Strait, making deployment to the open sea costly.⁸

Based on this understanding of the situation, U.S. *Maritime Strategy* judged that once a crisis broke out between the United States and the Soviet Union, it was highly likely to escalate into a global conventional war, and thus placed great emphasis on the ability to respond to a high-intensity conventional warfare.⁹ As shown in Fig. 5.1, the U.S. Navy placed great importance on forward-deployed capabilities centering on aircraft carrier vessel battle groups (CVBGs) and amphibious ready groups (ARGs), and it was decided in advance that 11 of the 13 CVBGs, excluding those in the repair phase, would take the lead in implementing the *Maritime Strategy* against the Soviet Union.

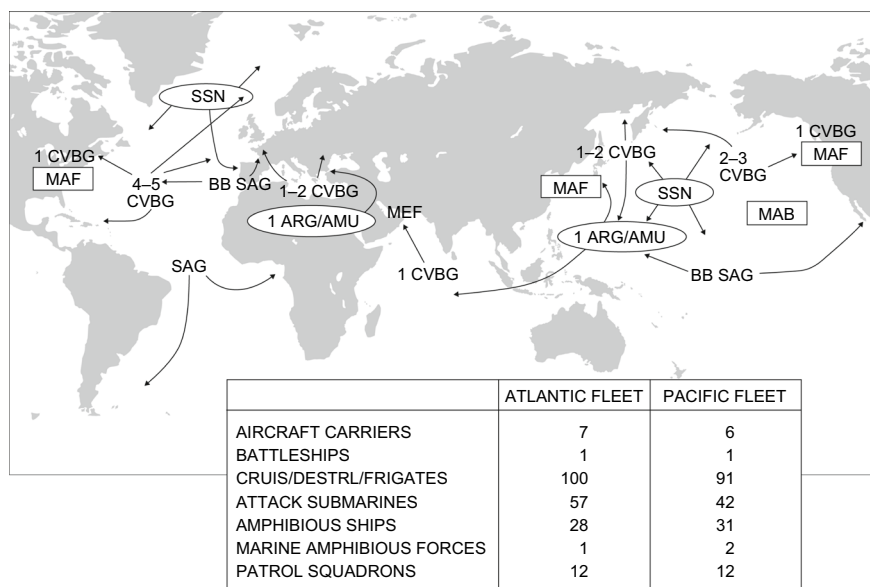


Fig. 5.1 Pre-deployment status of major forces in U.S. *Maritime Strategy*. Source John Hattendorf and Peter Swartz, eds., “The Maritime Strategy, 1984,” in *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1980s: Selected Documents*, U.S. Naval War College Newport Papers 33, 2008, p. 70

In a war against the Soviet Union, the U.S. Navy was to deploy four CVBGs to the North Sea, an equal number to the North Pacific, two to three others, plus a French carrier group, to attack from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea, and one to the Arabian Sea if necessary. On the other hand, surface ship units were not to immediately enter Soviet sea denial areas at the outset of the operation but were to strike from outrange with Tomahawk cruise missiles.¹⁰ Their main operational objectives were to attack the bastions, the “flanks of the Soviet Union,” or the strategic submarine action area, to support the ground war in the European theater and to protect maritime trade routes.

Thus, the *Maritime Strategy* envisioned precision strikes from outrange in the initial phase of military operations against the strong Soviet area denial capability, followed by a breakthrough of the Soviet sea denial area by things like carrier-borne aircraft. In the Far East theater, a landing operation by Marines on the Kamchatka Peninsula was envisioned, but only as a check on Soviet area denial and as a supplementary operation, although considering nuclear escalation, the probability of such a land attack option was not considered high. It is notable that, in principle, the emphasis was on gaining superiority at sea, (i.e., sea control) rather than on projecting forces on the mainland of the Soviet Union.

5.2 Power Projection Based on Sea Control: The Post-cold War Period (1990–2009)

With the end of the Cold War declared by the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union in 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States became the sole superpower with decisive military superiority. The disappearance of the bipolar structure based on ideological confrontation can be seen as a long-term affirmation of political and cultural pluralism, which later led to the multi-polar international society of the twenty-first century. However, immediately after the end of the Cold War, the international community was dominated by arguments affirming the triumph of the value of democracy and its universality, as shown in Francis Fukuyama's discussion in Chap. 1. James Mayall, in his 2000 book on the problems of the post-Cold War world, writes¹¹:

Since 1989 the problem of cultural and political diversity has re-surfaced in international life... These debates are about sovereignty, democracy and intervention. To be more precise, they are about the meaning and relevance of sovereignty—and its relationship to national identity and the principle of self-determination; about the claim that democracy should form the basis of the world order—with its corollary that democratization should be both the objective and the primary instrument of conflict resolution; and about the possibility of using outside force, not merely to deter aggression but to resolve civil conflicts—with the allied assumption that the justification for intervention should be humanitarian.

Since the Cold War ended in victory for the West and represented a triumph of values such as freedom and democracy, the argument that the remaining non-democracies should be successively democratized as a justification for involvement and intervention became a strong influence in the post-Cold War world. The military power of the United States and its allies has been overwhelmingly superior at sea, and there has been no one to challenge them for control of the seas. Therefore, U.S. and allied military might have the means to realize engagement and intervention around the world. *Forward from the Sea*, published by the U.S. Department of the Navy in 1994, is a strategic document that revises the *From the Sea* document published in the U.S. Navy's official journal in 1992. The document begins with the following statement about the Navy's perception immediately after the end of the Cold War: "This fundamental shift was a direct result of the changing strategic landscape- away from having to deal with a global maritime threat and toward projecting power and influence across the seas in response to regional challenges."¹² After the Cold War ended, the U.S. Navy's strategy matched the global situation, focusing on getting involved and taking action to support the spread of freedom and democracy in world politics.

Under these circumstances in which there were no opponents in terms of sea control, the United States shifted its emphasis to power projection in the maritime domain. In this process, large-scale wars between major powers were not considered, and relatively more emphasis was placed on "power projection and peacetime influence" to prepare for peacetime operations, crisis response, and regional conflicts.

Therefore, the emphasis at the operational level was on littoral operations and “sea-basing,” i.e., supply and base facility capabilities. In “peacetime forward presence operations,” the emphasis was on versatile CVBGs and ARGs.¹³

In the meantime, the U.S. Navy’s reorientation in response to this international situation does not require major updates to many hardware items, including key assets. Conventional take-off and landing (CTOL) aircraft carriers can respond to both sea control and power projection by selecting the armament of their onboard aircraft. In addition, large surface combatant ships are also versatile because they are self-contained and suitable for long-term operations. Moreover, since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. Navy has been using a vertical launch system (VLS) to launch standard ship-to-air missiles or Evolved Sea Sparrow ship-to-air missiles (ESSMs), the anti-submarine rocket (ASROC), and the Tomahawk cruise missile on a common platform, the MK41 VLS. In this way, in power projection-based operations, surface vessels could respond to varieties of missions by simply discharging their anti-submarine rockets and anti-aircraft missiles and reloading Tomahawks in the empty VLS cells.¹⁴ Many U.S. naval vessels had redundancy and did not require major changes in their force structure to respond to the change from the system that competed with the Soviet Union for sea control during the Cold War to one that emphasized power projection in the post-Cold War era. This is evident from the fact that in the 1991 Gulf War, the “Coalition of the Willing,” led by the U.S. military, organized its operational forces with a force structure unchanged from the Cold War period and demonstrated an overwhelming power projection against Iraq. Furthermore, the force composition and the tactical schema employed in the Gulf War represented an adaptation of the “Air-Land Battle” doctrine, which had been initially devised for the European theatre in the context of the Cold War contingencies.

After the terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania by Islamic extremists in 2001, the United States launched the War on Terror, officially known as the *Global War on Terrorism* (GWOT). There was no change in the U.S. military superiority in the maritime domain at this time as non-state terrorist groups and the small number of countries that supported them presented no challenge to the United States at sea. As such, there were no real concerns about maintaining sea control and the focus was on power projection. The perception of the situation in *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Sea Power* (CS21) of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, released in 2007, was that “Today, the United States and its partners find themselves competing for global influence in an era in which they are unlikely to be fully at war or fully at peace.”¹⁵ As such, “this strategy reaffirms the use of seapower to influence actions and activities at sea and ashore.” To that end, the document suggests that the U.S. military “will employ the global reach, persistent presence, and operational flexibility inherent in U.S. seapower to accomplish six key tasks, or strategic imperatives.”¹⁶ The six strategic imperatives designated in the report are: forward presence, deterrence, sea control, power projection, maritime security, and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR).¹⁷

Thus, after the disappearance of the Soviet Union as a near-peer competitor, the United States took advantage of its consistent military superiority in the maritime domain, forward deployed around the world with sea control as a given, and sought to

exercise its influence worldwide by projecting its military power. This was not only to maintain an offensive posture based on military rationality, but also coincided with the normative political intention of the United States to spread normative concepts such as freedom and liberalism, and to promote democracy in the world.

5.3 Return to Sea Control: China's Maritime Expansion (2010–2023)

Since the end of the twentieth century, China has begun to modernize its military in the wake of the Gulf War and the Taiwan Strait Crisis, and by around 2010 had achieved local military superiority in the maritime airspace surrounding its country through the efforts of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) at area denial, known as the A2/AD strategy. The area denial that China is establishing is considered to extend into the open sea for more than 1000 km from its mainland, forming a strategic environment somewhat similar to the Soviet Union's maritime fortification strategy at the end of the Cold War.

The U.S. Navy's *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, revised in 2015, (CS21R) states, with China's military development in mind, that "with strategic attention shifting to the Indo-Asia-Pacific, we will increase the number of ships, aircraft, and Marine Corps forces postured there. By 2020, approximately 60 percent of Navy ships and aircraft will be based in the region."¹⁸ In addition, it lists as military measures, for "potential adversaries to threaten naval and air forces at greater ranges by anti-access and area denial measure," and for "new challenges in cyberspace and the electromagnetic (EM) spectrum mean," among others, and the necessity to achieve all-domain access, which is not limited to the conventional area of operation.¹⁹

Against the first near-peer competitor in the maritime domain in two decades since the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War, U.S. military strategists' focus was primarily to maintain military superiority by demonstrating the ability to break through the PLA's area denial and project force. As Friedberg states, "In Asia, as elsewhere in the world, the strategic position of the United States rests ultimately on its ability to project power over great distances."²⁰ With awaring of its shaky military superiority, the first measures that the United States were the maintaining its conventional military superiority, namely demonstrating its power projection under an environment of PLA area denial. Specifically, the strategy was "giving the carrier strike group—the main component of power projection—the freedom of action and allowing it to demonstrate its conventional capabilities" and ensuring that advanced military forces destroy the PLA's command and control system (C2 network) and other major assets through long-range precision-guided attacks, etc., thus ensuring freedom of action. After that, things like the carrier strike groups would be able to project power in the same manner as before in the sea area of operations where

freedom of action is guaranteed. This means that in the post-Cold War era, the strategic environment—in which sea control was once a given—is changing.

Incidentally, the various proposals made in response to China's military rise and maritime expansion, including the *Air-Sea Battle Concept*, almost uniformly follow similar modes of thinking. The *Air-Sea Battle Concept*, a limited operational concept of the U.S. Navy and Air Force, as well as other related strategic and operational concepts, have much in common with the “long-term competitive strategy” or “countervailing (or offset) strategy” that was proposed during the arms race with the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War. Both are based on the idea of developing an asymmetrical advantage in a field in which one has an advantage, and then imposing a great cost on the opponent to catch up in order to exhaust it and ultimately win the war. This concept has often been presented in reports by think tanks and other organizations since around 2015, one example being “*the Third Offset Strategy*.” It is described in a memorandum titled “*Defense Innovation Initiative (DII)*” by then U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel in November 2014.²¹ The memorandum begins with the following statement: “I am establishing a broad, Department-wide initiative to pursue innovative ways to sustain and advance our military superiority for the 21st Century and improve business operations throughout the Department.”²² The DII was a comprehensive defense initiative that took into account the above-mentioned trends, and went beyond mere technological and operational reforms, to include personnel, organizational structure, policy, intelligence, and all other aspects of national defense, in order for the U.S. military to maintain its military superiority around the world in the future. These efforts were known as “*the Third Offset Strategy*.”

The essence of the DII is as follows:

We are entering an era where American dominance in key fighting domains is eroding, and we must find new and creative ways to sustain, and in some areas expand, our advantages even as we deal with more limited resources...We have always lived in an inherently competitive security environment and the past decade has proven no different. While we have been engaged in two large land mass wars over the last thirteen years, potential adversaries have been modernizing their militaries, developing and proliferating disruptive capabilities across the spectrum of conflict. This represents a clear and growing challenge to our military power. I see no evidence that this trend will change. At the same time, downward fiscal pressure will constrain the way we have traditionally addressed threats to our military superiority and demand a more innovative and agile defense enterprise. We must take the initiative to ensure that we do not lose the military-technological superiority that we have long taken for granted. History is instructive on this 21st Century challenge. The U.S. changed the security landscape in the 1970s and 1980s with networked precision strike, stealth, and surveillance for conventional forces. We will identify a third offset strategy that puts the competitive advantage firmly in the hands of American power projection over the coming decades.²³

The main points of the DII can be summarized as follows.

- (1) Maintain military superiority through department-wide transformation amid budgetary constraints.
- (2) A different form of enemy threat to that encountered in large-scale ground combat now exists.

- (3) The focus of innovation is on U.S. military technological superiority, as was in the past.
- (4) The *Third Offset Strategy* will maintain power projection capabilities for the next several decades.

If one were to read from these four points a long-term vision for the strategic direction of the U.S. military, it would be nothing less than “to maintain power projection capabilities while dealing with financial problems and continuing to maintain military superiority.” The 2012 *Defense Strategic Guidance* (DSG) states, in relation to long-term stability operations in the Middle East, that “U.S. forces will no longer be large enough to conduct long-term, large-scale stability operations” in relation to long-term stability operations in the Middle East.²⁴ Similarly, the *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR) 2014 noted that the United States was reviewing the force structure of large-scale land forces to fit stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.²⁵ In this way, the United States has recognized the potential threat posed by China’s military development and other factors since around 2010, and while reducing the scale of its ground operations in the Middle East, it has focused on controlling the seas in the maritime domain and maintaining a power projection capability that can break through the opponent’s efforts at area denial.

On the other hand, Barry Posen, in his book on the period from the end of the Cold War to the rise of China’s military power, described the traditional foreign policy of intervention and engagement as “the perils of liberal hegemony” and argued that “liberal hegemony has performed poorly in securing the United States over the last two decades, and given ongoing changes in the world it will perform less and less well. The strategy has been costly, wasteful, and counterproductive.”²⁶ Posen also criticized offensive strategies, such as the *Air-Sea Battle*, which would enable an attack in depth on the Chinese mainland by naval and air forces, saying, “military concept ‘Air-Sea Battle,’ which is easily read as an offensive military strategy to deny China the ability to defend itself against U.S. air, sea, and nuclear attack through sustained offensive operations against the Chinese mainland, has a distinctive Cold War flavor... The emerging pattern of U.S. behavior is both premature and wrong,” and “nuclear weapons make aggression against major powers very difficult, so India and Russia are inherent nuclear bulwarks against Chinese ambitions.”²⁷

As a result, Posen argues that the United States should not rely solely on its military superiority but should concentrate its resources on maintaining its influence in the global commons of the maritime, air, and space domains by having its allies and other nations assume their own strategic roles. Posen’s conclusion is that the United States should focus its resources on the control of public goods, or “command of the commons,” through a “restraint strategy” that refrains from direct intervention and involvement in other countries.²⁸ By doing so, the United States maintains access to global trade and communication, which are the sources of its prosperity.

From a practical standpoint, it is unlikely that Posen’s arguments will be explicitly adopted as a future strategy for the United States, given the importance it places on the credibility of its foreign policy and alliance relations. Of course, it is easy to criticize intervention and involvement in other countries and to argue that the cost should

be lowered by shifting responsibility for regional security (buck-passing) to allies.²⁹ However, if sea control is undermined and the main component of power projection, such as a carrier strike group, cannot advance into the area of operations, even if a long-range attack by conventional forces is planned from outside the enemy's area of denial, the effect of power projection will decrease in inverse proportion to the distance due to the tyranny of distance. Therefore, high priority must be placed on restoring sea control.

In 2017, the U.S. Navy Surface Forces Command released a report titled *Surface Force Strategy* with the subtitle *Return to Sea Control*. Its objective is “to achieve and sustain sea control at the time and place of our choosing to protect the homeland from afar, build and maintain global security, project the national power of the United States, and win decisively.”³⁰ This marks the first time in a quarter century, since the end of the Cold War, that the U.S. Navy has recognized a challenger to its control of the seas. The report argues that in order to control the seas, it is necessary for surface forces to implement “distributed lethality.” This means not only multiple assets functioning in unison, such as carrier strike groups and expeditionary strike groups, but also “is achieved by increasing the offensive and defensive capability of individual warships, employing them in dispersed formations across a wide expanse of geography, and generating distributed fires.”³¹ This strategy “to survive and maintain a continuous warfighting capability under the threat of A2/AD” is embodied in the U.S. Navy's “*Distributed Maritime Operation*” (DMO), the U.S. Marine Corps' “*Expeditionary Advanced Based Operation*” (EABO), and the operational concept known as “littoral operations under contested environment” (LOCE).³² *Advantage at Sea* is a joint Navy-Marine Corps-Coast Guard strategic document that replaces *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* (CS21) published in 2007 and 2015. Rather than a traditional comprehensive strategy document, it outlines specific measures to win the long-term competition with specific adversaries, namely China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran.³³

Thus, rather than simply outranging the enemy's advanced area denial zone, the U.S. military is trying to increase the survivability of individual assets within the area denial zone and ensure freedom of maneuver, ultimately creating an environment in which power projection by powerful but vulnerable carrier strike groups and other assets can be demonstrated against the enemy's area denial. In other words, the U.S. military seeks to have various assets conduct different modes of operations under threat and outside of it, ultimately securing military superiority. This is known as “*Inside-out Defense*.”³⁴ This kind of military concept has some persuasive power as a means of denying China the achievement of its strategic military objectives while maintaining some degree of control over escalation. Elbridge Colby also argues that since a cost-intensive strategy relying on conventional power projection capabilities carries a high risk of horizontal escalation, the United States should avoid such a risk by adopting a “denial defense” strategy to deter China and thereby avoid a territorial *fait-accompli*.³⁵ In short, in response to China's military development, the United States is pursuing measures to maintain its power projection in the first place and is increasingly allocating resources to maintain its control over the sea.

Thus far, I have described the events that affected the U.S. Navy and its military strategy from the end of the Cold War to the year 2022. In general, the United States has not experienced a serious military threat nearby its maritime domain since its founding and has deliberately allocated resources for area denial at a rate considerably lower than other countries. When the U.S. Navy recognizes a challenger in the maritime domain, such as the Soviet military or the PLA, it gives priority to securing control of the sea in order to maintain its superiority in the maritime domain. Moreover, in the post-Cold War period, when the U.S. Navy saw that it had secured its maritime superiority, or in periods such as the War on Terror, it has emphasized power projection in a manner that is consistent with U.S. foreign policy.

It goes without saying that from the end of World War II to the present, the U.S. Navy has never actually fought a conventional war of high intensity in the maritime domain against a near-peer competitor. As I have repeatedly noted throughout this book so far, during the period analyzed in this book, the U.S. Navy's actions in conflict were based on its superiority in sea control, and it conducted power projection with little hindrance to its operations at sea. In 1982, in what was said to be the largest exercise since the end of World War II, two carrier battle groups covertly deployed to the Sea of Japan from southwest of the Aleutian Islands, the Soviet Union's defense line in the Sea of Okhotsk.³⁶

These exercises suggested that the U.S. Navy's contingency maneuver in the Far East was to approach Soviet territory by navigating a route from the Northwest Pacific to the Sea of Japan, keeping its presence as secret as possible through emission control (EMCON), such as radio silence.³⁷ As Secretary of the Navy John Lehman testified the Navy planned "to catch the (Tu-22) Backfires on the ground," hinting that the United States intended to attack the Soviet Union's area denial assets such as ground-based attack aircraft, strategic nuclear submarines, and various tactical assets at airfields and ports.³⁸

Thus, even in the high-intensity conventional war between the United States and Soviet Union, the U.S. Navy emphasized forward deployment and neutralization of enemy forces as much as possible. After the end of the Cold War, as demonstrated in the Gulf War, U.S. naval forces were able to advance and assemble to the launch area for carrier aircraft and Tomahawk cruise missiles without being impeded by the enemy. Force projectiles launched from there could share detection information with satellites, high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft, drones and so on, in real time, and destroy targets like the opponent's command center and radar sites with pinpoint accuracy. Enemy forces on the coast were disrupted by the loss of their command and communications systems, and after destroying them individually, the ground forces could advance inland from the landing sites with virtually no resistance.

5.4 Changing Strategic Objectives in the U.S. Air Force: Strategic Bombing and Expeditionary Forces

While I have so far focused mainly on the U.S. Navy, here I briefly present the strategic transition of the U.S. Air Force. The results of the examination of the Air Force's strategic objectives are the same as those of the Navy, and it can be seen that area denial for the U.S. Air Force, too, has been in a secondary position in its strategic objectives.

During the Cold War, the primary mission of the U.S. Air Force was long-range strategic bombing, one part of the "nuclear triad" as the Strategic Air Command (SAC). In addition to SAC, there were two other important commands: the Tactical Air Command (TAC), whose primary mission was air defense operations and close air support of ground forces deployed to theaters around the world, and the Air Defense Command (ADC), which was responsible for air defense of the mainland against Soviet long-range bombers.³⁹ TAC was to protect, along with allied forces hosting them, forward-deployed bases scattered around the world and to support ground operations mainly in the European theater. ADC is also closely related to nuclear deterrence. Therefore, these three commands did not have as their primary mission confronting Soviet maritime forces together with the U.S. Navy in the maritime domain. In the first place, there were no Soviet surface fleet capable of opposing the U.S. carrier battle groups centering on the CTOL carrier head-on. Only Soviet nuclear submarines could advance to the vicinity of the U.S. mainland and pose a threat. Therefore, there was little need for the U.S. Air Force to carry out missions with the Navy in the maritime domain at the tactical level.

The white paper, *The Air Force and U.S. National Security: Global Reach-Global Power*, published by the U.S. Air Force in 1990 identified five major roles for the U.S. Air Force immediately after the end of the Cold War. These were: "Sustain deterrence-nuclear forces; provide versatile combat force-theater operations & power projection; supply rapid global mobility- airlift & tankers; control the high ground- space & C3I systems; build U.S. influence- strengthening security partners and relationships."⁴⁰ Since this document was issued in 1990, the year after the declaration of the end of the Cold War, it is postulated that numerous concepts delineated therein were inherited from the Cold War era. However, from the document's title as well as from these five roles, it is clear that during the period from the end of the Cold War to immediately after, the U.S. Air Force existed as a strategic air force as before, emphasizing military superiority and power projection based on the premise of global deployment.

Global Reach-Global Power includes a section on "complementary air force and naval operations," which is related to forward deployment and power projection; controlling access to areas of operation, B-52 strategic bomber mines, Harpoon anti-ship missile operations, and wide-area surveillance capabilities.⁴¹

Later, in 2003, the U.S. Department of the Air Force released a document titled *The U.S. Air Force Transformation Flight Plan*, which states that "transforming the Air Force from a threat-based, forward deployed force designed to fight the Cold War to a capability-based force based primarily in the United States that is sufficiently flexible

to conduct a wide range of operations throughout the world while accommodating the high operational tempo of today's contingency environment."⁴² The first step in the Air Force's cultural and organizational reorganization, it stated, was to establish an "Air and Space Expeditionary Force" (AEF) that would embrace "the unique characteristics of air and space power- range, speed, flexibility and precision."⁴³ Thus, it is clear that since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. Air Force, like the Navy, placed emphasis on power projection beyond sea-air space rather than area denial.

In addition, as seen in the *Air Superiority 2030 Flight Plan*, published by the U.S. Department of the Air Force in 2016, regarding target acquisition and engagement capabilities in air warfare, "a mix of capabilities to penetrate the highly contested environment as well as deliver effects from stand-off ranges offers a balanced approach to counter the A2/AD strategy."⁴⁴ Thus the U.S. Air Force's approach against area denial, like that of the U.S. Navy, is an offensive approach, that is, to use long-range precision strikes and power projection by penetrating area denial networks. Moreover, as the title of the document "air superiority" suggests, the U.S. Air Force will face challengers to the superiority it has maintained in the world's airspace in the future. This is similar to the acknowledgement in the previous section that the military superiority and sea control that the U.S. Navy has maintained over most of the world since the end of the Cold War is being challenged.

The situation in which the U.S. Air Force emphasizes power projection and regards area denial as a secondary function of forward-deployed base defense (or delegates base defense to allied countries that host the bases) can be seen from the number of deployed assets from the end of the Cold War to the present. Table 5.2 shows the number of major air assets deployed by the U.S. Air Force from 1985 to 2020.

Around the time of end of the Cold War, more than 700 F-15 fighter interceptors (FIs) were in operation to counter Soviet bombers but less than 200 of the successor aircraft, the F-22, were produced due in part to high costs. As a result, the U.S. Air Force will have less than 300 interceptor fighters by 2020.⁴⁵ In contrast, the largest number of F-15 s at any one time was 904 in 1990.⁴⁶ Even then, the number of F-15 s was not even close to sufficient in view of the U.S. military posture with forward-deployed bases in Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, and elsewhere in the world. This is also evident from the fact that the number of F-15 s procured by Japan for air defense in an area limited to the vicinity of the Japanese mainland was ultimately 201 F-15 series aircrafts.⁴⁷

The F-16 is a multi-role aircraft used for air defense combat as well as close air support, and has been used frequently in stability operations, but this number has been rapidly declining since around 2015. Thus, even when looking at the assets of the U.S. Air Force, it is apparent that area denial is not part of U.S. military strategy except in the context of the nuclear strategy of air defense capability against the Soviet bombers in the late Cold War. Based on the analysis so far, Table 5.3 assesses U.S. maritime strategy.

Table 5.2 Changes in major air assets of the U.S. Air Force

Type of machine	1985	1990	1995	Year 2000	2005	2010	2015	Year 2020
B-52 (strategic bombing)	263	187	94	94	82	62	54	58
B-1 (Versatile bombing)	1	90	95	93	88	64	63	61
B-2 (same as above)	–	–	15	21	21	19	20	20
FB-111 (same as above)	61	24	–	–	–	–	–	–
F-22 (interceptor fighter)	–	–	–	6	16	139	159	166
F-15 (same as above)	766	827	522	494	399	396	116	105
F-15 Strike Eagle (land attack)	–	77	204	210	212	217	211	211
F-35 (same as above)	–	–	–	–	–	–	42	205
F-16 (multirole)	584	1251	1253	1420	1313	738	585	553
F-111 (land attack)	286	273	95	260	–	–	–	–
F-117 (same as above)	–	46	52	52	51	–	–	–
F-4, A-10 and other close air support aircraft	Approximately 1900	831	335	443	466	143	160	

Sources Prepared by the author from IISS, *The Military Balance 1985–1986*, p. 12; *The Military Balance 1990–1991*, p. 23; *The Military Balance 1995–1996*, p. 29; *The Military Balance 2000–2001*, pp. 30–31; *The Military Balance 2005–2006*, p. 28; *The Military Balance 2010*, p. 40; *The Military Balance 2015*, p. 49; *The Military Balance 2020*, p. 55

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Table 5.3 Assessment of U.S. Maritime Strategy

	Late cold war (1980–1989)	The post-cold war/war on terrorism (1990–2009)	China's maritime expansion (2010–2023)
Area denial	3	3	3
Sea control	4	5	4
Power projection	5	5	5

Source Prepared by the author

Notes

1. Here, “attack submarines, etc.,” include attack submarines (SSNs) and cruise missile submarines (SSGNs).
2. Turner, “Missions of the U.S. Navy,” p. 2.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Peter Swartz with Karin Duggan, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts (1970–2010): A Brief Summary*, Center for Naval Analysis, December 2011.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 5–11. Of course, many of these were secret documents designated Top Secret or Top Secret during the Cold War.
7. John Hattendorf and Peter Swartz, eds., “The Maritime Strategy, 1984,” in *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1980s: Selected Documents*, U.S. Naval War College Newport Papers 33, 2008.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 52–53.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 63. Not only is the magnitude of the damage that could be expected from the outset to raid a surface force against a strong Soviet area denial unacceptable, but the operational action itself is highly likely to fail due to battle damage.
11. James Mayall, *World Politics: Progress and its Limits*, Polity Press, 2000, p. 7.
12. U.S. Department of the Navy, *Forward...From the Sea*, 1994, p. 1.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.
14. The Mk. 41 VLS launches missiles and other weapons directly from a modularized containment vessel, and the cell in which the module is loaded is the same regardless of the type of missile or weapon. Since the early 1980s, the VLS has been used on *Spruance*-class destroyers, *Ticonderoga*-class Aegis cruisers, and other surface vessels. Lockheed Martin, “Mk41 Launching System Fact Sheet.”
15. U.S. Department of the Navy, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower (CS-21)*, October 2007, p. 1.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 9–11.
18. U.S. Department of the Navy, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower: Forward, Engaged, Ready (CS-21R)*, March 2015, p. 11.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 19–22.
20. Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle*, p. 11.
21. U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, *The Defense Innovation Initiative*, November 15, 2014.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
23. “Memorandum from Secretary of Defense for Deputy Secretary of Defense, et. al., on The Defense Innovation Initiative, November 15, 2014.”
24. The formal name of the document is: U.S. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, p. 6.
25. U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report 2014*, March 4, 2014, p. IX.
26. Barry Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy*, Cornell University Press, 2014, p. 24.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 95–96.
28. *Ibid.*, 135.
29. Mearsheimer, John, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics, Updated Edition*, W. W. Norton and Company, 2014, p. 139.
30. Commander, Naval Surface Forces, *Surface Force Strategy: Return to Sea Control*, January 2017, p. 5.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
32. U.S. Department of the Navy, *Advantage at Sea: Prevailing with Integrated All-Domain Naval Power*, December 2020, p. 5.

33. Ibid.
34. Thomas Mahnken, et. al., *Tightening the Chain: Implementing a Strategy of Maritime Pressure in the Western Pacific*, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment, 2019.
35. Elbridge Colby, *The Strategy of Denial: American Defense in an Age of Great Power Conflict*, Yale University Press, 2021, pp. 149–152.
36. Pauline Kerr, *Eyeball to Eyeball: U.S. & Soviet Naval & Air Operations in the North Pacific, 1981–1990*, Peace Research Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1991, p. 5.
37. Ibid., pp. 8–9. EMCON is a measure to control radio waves such as search radar waves, communication waves, and underwater radiated noise emitted from the screw, in order to reduce the radiation, and to act in such a way that the ship's presence is kept as secret as possible.
38. Ibid.
39. In 1992, it was reorganized into the “Air Combat Command” and the “Air Mobility Command.”.
40. U.S. Department of the Air Force, *The Air Force and U.S. National Security: Global Reach-Global Power (White Paper)*, June 1990, p. 5.
41. Ibid, p.10.
42. HQ U.S. Air Force/XPXC Future Concepts and Transformation Division, *The U.S. Air Force Transformation Flight Plan*, November 2003, p.31.
43. Ibid.
44. The U.S. Air Force Enterprise Capability Collaboration Team, *Air Superiority 2030 Flight Plan*, May 2016, p. 7.
45. On the other hand, under the conditions of an established C4I network environment, such as early warning aircraft, the F-22 is considered to have a combat capability unmatched by the F-15, so a reduction in the number of aircraft does not directly translate into a reduction in capability.
46. IISS, *The Military Balance 1990–1991*, p. 23.
47. Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2016*, p. 405.

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Chapter 6

The Maritime Strategy of the United Kingdom: Declining Strength and Unchanged Force Composition



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Because of the Atlantic Ocean to its west and the English Channel separating it from continental Europe, Britain is essentially an island nation that can defend itself without much cost. Neither Napoleon’s France nor Nazi Germany was able to launch a seaborne invasion of the British mainland. Even during the Cold War, there was no need to maintain area denial in response to a large—scale projection of force by the Soviet Union. It is not that there was not a possibility that the Soviet Union would carry out a large—scale missile attack on the British mainland and its coastal areas but, before that, land warfare was expected to take center stage in the European theater, especially in East and West Germany; and it was estimated that the U.S. Navy would deploy carrier battle groups in the waters around Britain to the North Sea in advance of such a conventional war. Therefore, it was unlikely that the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries, which could not oppose the U.S. Navy head-on, would launch a large-scale operation across the maritime domain toward the British mainland in a surprise attack.¹

When analyzing the military strategy of the United Kingdom in the maritime domain, it is not entirely accurate to conduct a strategic analysis focusing on the United Kingdom alone since many of the individual assets, as well as strategic nuclear submarines, are provided to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and are supposed to be operated jointly. On the other hand, from the viewpoint of force composition, it can be observed that, in principle, there are no assets, whether large surface combatant vessels or major operational aircraft, that are dedicated for area denial during the period analyzed in this book. Conversely, as for submarines, a

Table 6.1 Number of major operational aircraft (fixed wing) in the royal air force

Type of aircrafts	1985	1990	1995	Year 2000	2005	2010	2015	Year 2020
Buccaneer (Buccaneer: tactical bomber)	52	34	–	–	–	–	–	–
Tornado (Tornado: multirole)	123	234	315	214	179	113	90	–
Typhoon (Typhoon: multirole)	–	–	–	–	17	58	113	144
F-35 (multirole)	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	18
Harrier (Harrier: ground attack)	53	66	93	64	50	55	–	–
Jaguar (Jaguar: close air support)	120	44	69	53	24	–	–	–

Sources Prepared by the author from IISS, *The Military Balance 1985–1986*, p. 42; *The Military Balance 1990–1991*, p. 85; *The Military Balance 1995–1996*, p. 66; *The Military Balance 2000–2001*, p. 82; *The Military Balance 2005–2006*, p. 104; *The Military Balance 2010*, p. 171; *The Military Balance 2015*, p. 151; and *The Military Balance 2020*, p. 160

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certain number of conventional submarines were in operation until the end of the Cold War and it can be inferred that they were dedicated for choke point defense around the Greenland, Iceland and United Kingdom (GIUK) Gap.

Regarding the Royal Air Force, Table 6.1 shows the changes in the number of major operational aircraft. As is clear from this table, the Royal Air Force's basic force structure consists of bombers and multi-role fighter-attack aircraft that can be used for air defense, ground attack, and close air support. It has not possessed interceptor aircraft such as the F-15 that specialize in air defense throughout the period analyzed in this book. In addition, the Royal Navy has not built any small- to medium-sized surface combatants during the period covered by this analysis, such as frigates with a full load capacity of less than 3000 tons, except for mine warfare vessels and coastal defense vessels. From this perspective, it may be deduced that the Royal Navy did not prioritize operational engagements such as anti-submarine warfare under the air cover by land-based aircrafts, or in the terms, or in other terms, the enforcement of area denial.

6.1 Changes in Strategic Military Objectives in the Maritime Domain

The maritime military strategy of the United Kingdom in modern times has often been the subject of analysis in the field of international politics as an example of the power-transition theory; that is, from the United Kingdom to the United States. In general, the discussion tends to conclude that “strategic withdrawal or strategic contraction due to the decline of the United Kingdom and the reduction of the Royal Navy synchronized with this withdrawal or contraction.” Paul Kennedy argued that the strength of naval power depended on economic power, and that the development of the Royal Navy from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century was synchronized with the trade revolution. In other words, global free trade was made possible by Britain’s global expansion as a colonial empire and the Industrial Revolution was also synchronized with the rise of the British Empire, which was characterized by economic power and military superiority, or “Pax Britannica.”²

The main reasons, it is argued, for the decline of the British Empire involved the same “strategic over-extension” that the Spanish Empire once saw, that is, the mismanagement of a colonial empire over a wider area than it could sustain given the military burden it brought about. As a result, after two world wars, Britain was forced to downsize its navy in line with the contraction and decline of its colonial and industrial base. During the Cold War, it could no longer hope to be a “first-class navy” that could compete with the two superpowers, but at best could simply maintain a “good second-class navy.”³

However, the process of decline was accompanied by several turning points and changes in strategic objectives, and it is not correct to simply conclude that the waning was a linear process proportionate to economic decline. Britain’s industrial production had already been surpassed by the United States by the 1880s and was below that of Germany in 1913, just before World War I.⁴ On the other hand, military superiority, especially in the naval, air, and space domains, is not determined by the number of soldiers or war-making assets. It is the cumulative result of the advanced science and technology of the time, long-term investment, and industrial infrastructure. While the economic power of the United Kingdom was declining relatively, its naval power at the end of World War I was still superior to that of the United States or Japan.

Although the United Kingdom was one of the victors in World War II, Kennedy argued that it was “illusory victory” in terms of its economic power or influence on overall national power.⁵ In 1941, for example, at the beginning of the war, the total defense budget for the country was \$6.5 billion, more than the \$4.5 billion for the United States. However, the balance was reversed in 1943, with the United Kingdom spending only \$11.1 billion—less than one-third of America’s \$37.5 billion.

In addition, according to Kennedy, “the Royal Navy’s budget and personnel were lower than those of the other two services...Air power had chased the battle-fleet from the ocean and posed a threat to every surface ship. Land power had shown itself in most cases impervious to the pressures exerted by naval forces alone. The

atomic bomb challenged the relevance of all orthodox weaponry in a Great Power clash,” and the relative importance of sea control and power projection, which had once supported British hegemony, was declining.⁶

Nevertheless, at that time, the British sea power surpassed that of the Soviet Union and was considered to be the second most powerful in the world. In the mid-1950s, at the beginning of the Cold War, the Royal Navy possessed a reasonable power projection capability centering on aircraft carriers and, as a key member of NATO, it allocated forces to oppose those of the Warsaw Pact forces, contributing to the maintenance of sea control over the world’s major seas, along with the United States. While at the same time it retained both the intention and capability to protect its colonial and other interests around the world. Its force structure was centered on battleships until World War II and on aircraft carriers thereafter and was consistently based on sea control and power projection in the open seas rather than placing an emphasis on homeland defense. In other words, even after two world wars, British maritime military strategy remained unchanged in principle. Table 6.2 compares the number of major naval vessels of the United Kingdom, the United States, the Soviet Union, and France in 1955.

However, the objective of maintaining such global sea control and power projection was gradually lost. The enormous cost of maintaining colonies was not worth the return, and after the independence of Ghana in 1957, the former colonies of the British Empire were allowed to become independent one after another through the 1960s. In this way, one of the strategic objectives of its navy (as with the navies of other powers)—the “protection of overseas interests”—was gradually lost.

Richard Rosecrance, in his book on British military strategy since the 1960s, states, “three arenas of commitment—strategic, European, and worldwide—together comprise Britain’s financial problem. If any one of them could be dropped or substantially reduced, the other two could be sustained with continuity and vigor.”⁷ As a result of diverting its resources to maintain independent nuclear force and confront the Warsaw Pact countries as a major NATO member, the Royal Navy no longer had the resources to maintain sea control between the British mainland and the rest of the world, or to maintain a global power projection capability in order to protect British territories and other interests around the world.

Table 6.2 Comparison of the number of major naval vessels in 1955

Type of ships	United Kingdom	United States	Soviet Union	France
Conventional aircraft carrier	11	18	—	5
Light aircraft carriers and anti-submarine aircraft carriers	8	73	—	—
Battleship	5	13	3	2
Cruiser	23	32	28	5

Source Prepared by the author from Raymond Blacker ed., *Jane’s Fighting Ships 1955–56*, Jane’s Fighting Ships Publishing, 1956

As Rosecrance points out, in 1968 the political intention was to give up Britain's global influence. In parallel with the devaluation of the British pound and other measures, the Labour Party government undertook a major reform of defense policy in response to the financial crisis. It was a strategic withdrawal usually referred to as the "withdrawal from east of the Suez Canal" and involved concentrating forces in the European and North Atlantic theaters instead. The following points were introduced in British defense policy documents of 1968 along with the drastic troop reduction policy.⁸

- (1) Britain's defence effort will in future be concentrated mainly in Europe and the North Atlantic area.
- (2) We shall accelerate the withdrawal of our forces from Malaysia and Singapore and complete it by the end of 1971. We shall also withdraw from the Persian Gulf by the same time.
- (3) No special capability for use outside Europe will be maintained when our withdrawal from Singapore and Malaysia, and the Persian Gulf, is completed.

At about the same time as this downsizing and dismantling of the empire, the United Kingdom focused on possessing its own nuclear capability and devoted a great deal of military resources to it. Lacking the economic and technological basis to develop an effective nuclear capability on its own, the British decided to introduce submarine-launched ballistic missiles (Polaris system) and strategic nuclear submarines from the United States, resulting in a further drain on the Royal Navy's resources—already on a downward trend—as well as leading to a reduction in sea control and power projection in the conventional forces. These developments suggest that from the 1960s to the early 1970s, the United Kingdom changed its military strategic objectives in the maritime domain significantly. In other words, it is appropriate to classify the maritime military strategy of the United Kingdom over this period into the two categories as shown in Table 6.3.

Although the lack of sea control and power projection represented by the absence of the conventional take-off and landing (CTOL) carrier came to the surface through the Falklands War in 1982, the Royal Navy has not changed its basic force structure until very recently and has maintained a limited nuclear capability and a level of sea control that supplements the superiority of the United States in the oceans, and a limited power projection to respond to low-intensity conflicts or peacetime disaster relief. The rebuilding of sea control or open-sea deployment capabilities, symbolized by the commissioning of HMS *Queen Elizabeth* class aircraft carrier, began to materialize around 2020, but the number of assets required for continuous open-sea

Table 6.3 Changes in military strategic objectives of the U.K. in the maritime domain

First Period (–1968)	Maintain omnipresent (albeit declining) interests around the world
Second period (1968–)	Exercise influence within the sphere of national power in the European and the North Atlantic theater

Source Prepared by the author

deployment remains insufficient. These capabilities are necessary for the realization of the “Global Britain” vision that accompanies its withdrawal from the European Union (EU) and the extent to which the U.K. government is able to make the right investment decisions will determine the success or failure of the acquisition of these capabilities.

6.2 Maintaining Independent Nuclear Forces

Until the early 1960s, Britain’s nuclear weapons capability was operated by the Royal Air Force. These strategic bombers were known as V bombers.⁹ They dropped gravity nuclear bombs, but their feasibility was questionable given the unlikelihood of penetrating Soviet air defenses and then attacking, so the United Kingdom decided to independently begin development of an intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) called the “Blue Streak.”

However, in addition to development costs and technical problems, the liquid-fueled Blue Streak required a considerable amount of time between the loading of the missile and its launch, as fuel injection and other operations were carried out immediately before launch, making it vulnerable to a first-strike by the Soviet Union. For this reason, the effectiveness of the Blue Streak became an issue and in 1960 the Macmillan Administration cancelled the program and instead obtained an agreement from the Eisenhower Administration in the United States to provide the Skybolt air-launch cruise missile system, which was being developed by the United States for use on aircraft. The Skybolt missile system necessitated the continuous airborne deployment of strategic bombers on a 24-h basis. It has been criticized for its excessive operational costs and its insufficient deterrent capability to effectively counter a preemptive nuclear strike by the Soviet Union. Therefore, the Kennedy administration gave priority to the development of a submarine-launched ballistic missile called the “Polaris System,” which had superior survivability, and proceeded to cancel the Skybolt project.¹⁰

The rationale behind the United Kingdom’s prioritization of an independent nuclear force, notwithstanding its fiscal constraints, stemmed from apprehensions regarding the complete reliance on the United States’ extended deterrence capabilities. In particular, if the Soviet Union sensed this lack of trust, there was the fear that it might decide to launch a preemptive strike against Western European countries believing that the United States would not intervene with a counterstrike.

On the other hand, from the perspective of the United States, the possession of an independent nuclear capability by the United Kingdom was unwelcome. During that period, the prevailing assessment posited that the augmentation and multipolarity of nuclear powers would diminish the efficacy of nuclear deterrence. Moreover, it would escalate the risk of miscalculations attributable to the diverse perceptions and intentions of the numerous stakeholders involved. According to Snyder, “it is rather remarkable that the balance of terror is generally believed to be most stable when it is bipolar and least stable when it is multipolar, whereas the exact reverse was said to

be true in the traditional theory of the balance of power...A bipolar balance of terror is said to be relatively stable because only two power centers have the capacity to initiate nuclear war and because they are likely to be cautious in conflict situations which involve the danger of nuclear war.”¹¹

Nevertheless, the United Kingdom was adamant about operating its own nuclear forces. The cancellation of the Skybolt program became a diplomatic issue because it was perceived as an obstacle to the British nuclear strategy as well as to the Kennedy administration’s intention to monopolize nuclear forces. The United States would provide the Polaris system, excluding nuclear warheads, and the British would install domestically produced nuclear warheads. Four nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) equipped with these warheads would be operated, with one on strategic patrol at all times.

Since the start of operations, the United Kingdom has consistently delegated the operation of its strategic nuclear submarines to NATO and “it will however remain operationally independent and available for use by the United Kingdom alone in a case of supreme national need,” thus demonstrating a certain degree of consideration to concerns about nuclear proliferation or arms control.¹²

6.3 The Situation up to the Falklands War (1980–1981)

While the introduction of the Polaris System contributed to NATO’s nuclear strategy, sea control became dependent on the United States in principle and the intention and capability to project forces into remote areas declined. Furthermore, in 1968, the United Kingdom decided to retire the only CTOL aircraft carrier, the HMS *Ark Royal*, which was finally done in 1978 after a number of twists and turns. The *Invincible*-class carriers, designed for short take-off and vertical landing (STOVL) aircraft, subsequently replaced its predecessor.¹³

These were equipped with Sea King anti-submarine helicopters and Sea Harrier short/vertical take-off and landing (S/VTOL) aircraft, but their capabilities differed significantly from those of CTOL aircraft carriers. Since CTOL carriers launch their aircraft from catapults, their fuel and ammunition payloads are completely different from those of STOVL carriers or short take-off but arrested recovery (STOBAR) carriers, which are used by Russian and Chinese carriers.¹⁴ Therefore, in addition to air defense at sea—in other words, sea control—by their onboard attack aircraft, CTOL carriers also have the ability to strike at sea or ground targets. Therefore, CTOL carriers’ primary mission is power projection.

On the other hand, helicopters carried by *Invincible*-class light aircraft carriers were mainly designed to eliminate Soviet submarines operating in the North Sea area, in other words, anti-submarine sweeps. S/VTOL aircraft are also extremely limited in payload capacity and cannot carry missiles with large explosive charges for surface/ship attacks, so their primary mission is air defense. In addition, S/VTOL aircraft have a limited operational range, and from a sea control perspective, they are more limited than CTOL aircraft carriers.¹⁵ Consequently, the principal mission

of STOVL light aircraft carriers is not the execution of power projection, which is the central objective of CTOL aircraft carriers. Rather, their focus is on constrained air defense operations and serving as a strategic component in sea control. They play a crucial role in neutralizing Soviet nuclear submarines endeavoring to disrupt maritime trade routes in the North Atlantic and other regions.¹⁶

From the end of the 1960s through to the 1980s, the U.K.’s defense budget was constantly constrained, and severe disarmament continued in response. In 1974, its defense budget as a percentage of GNP was 5.5% but it gradually declined to 4.5 percent, close to France’s 3.8% and West Germany’s 4.1%.¹⁷ As a result, on the eve of the outbreak of the Falklands War in 1981, the Royal Navy’s major equipment had been reduced to the levels shown in Table 6.4.

By the end of 1971, the Royal Navy had withdrawn from its bases in the Persian Gulf. However, Royal Navy operations did not cease completely east of Suez. Despite the loss of bases, the deployment of forces was carried out on a scale possible under the financial constraints. The 1968 defense policy document cited earlier also states that “we shall, however, retain a general capability based in Europe including the United Kingdom, which can be deployed overseas as in our judgement circumstances demand, including support for the United Nations operations.”¹⁸ The Iran-Iraq War that broke out in 1980 threatened the security of British maritime commerce so the Royal Navy deployed a surface ship force called the “Armilla Patrol” to the Persian Gulf.¹⁹ This small force consisted of no more than two destroyers or frigates and an accompanying supply ship. The main reason for deploying this force was to escort British merchant ships, but it was also intended to check the Soviet Navy, which was increasing its presence in the Middle East at the time.²⁰

Such a small surface-ship force is not capable of withstanding a high-intensity conflict. However, they do fulfill important naval missions by providing a political presence. As of 1982—at a low threat, low intensity level of confrontation or conflict, or in peacetime when it does not reach that level—the Royal Navy continues to maintain some level of emergency deployment capability and is considered to be capable of conducting both maritime and sea to land operations.²¹ In other words, it can be understood that since the late Cold War, the United Kingdom’s military strategy in the maritime domain, in terms of capability, has been oriented toward exercising limited sea control and power projection based on the assumption that the United States controls the seas.

Table 6.4 Number of major British naval vessels in 1981

Strategic nuclear submarine	Attack nuclear submarine	Conventional submarine	Light aircraft carrier	(Guided) missile destroyer	Frigate	Landing craft
4	12	16	2	14	46	2

Source Prepared by the author from IISS, *The Military Balance 1981–1982*, 1981, p. 28
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6.4 The Limits of Operational Capability in the Falklands War (1982)

Following a prolonged period of force reduction after World War II, the Falklands War broke out in 1982. As shown in Fig. 6.1, the Falkland Islands are about 7000 nautical miles (approximately 13,000 km) away from the British mainland, and the only possible supply stop for the British was Ascension Island, more than 3000 nautical miles (approximately 5500 km) from the islands. In the execution of operations within such distant theaters, destroyers, frigates, and additional classes of surface combatants are unable to undertake missions independently. In conjunction with auxiliary naval vessels, it was imperative to mobilize a substantial fleet of civilian ships to constitute a logistical support squadron to accompany them, with essential provisions, fuel, and ordnance. The Royal Navy conscripted an extensive array of passenger and cargo vessels, in addition to reconditioning the apparatus of retired amphibious assault ships, for the purpose of assembling a maritime flotilla.

The problems that arose for the Royal Navy when conducting combat operations in the Falklands were not limited to supply. With the decommissioning of the last Royal Navy CTOL carrier, HMS *Ark Royal*, in 1978, aircraft of large weight and payload could no longer be operated from the *Invincible*-class light carriers. The light aircraft carriers were not designed for anti-ship or anti-surface operations. Not only could they not operate large attack aircraft capable of anti-ship and land attacks, but they also could not handle airborne early warning (AEW) aircraft to search for and detect wide-area airborne and maritime targets in the sky and distribute this information to friendly forces. Therefore, it was impossible to conduct missions such as combat air patrol (CAP) over a wide area or distribute friendly and enemy information by early warning aircraft. And throughout the conflict it was difficult to detect in advance Argentine aircraft that wished to attack from beyond the radar horizon. As a result, it was necessary to conduct air defense combat by scrambling the 40 or so Harrier/Sea Harrier fighter aircraft that were constantly on standby on the ships.

If the search, detection, and tracking network centering on early warning aircraft is lacking, it is impossible to detect and react to low-altitude incoming enemy attack aircraft and anti-ship missiles at an early point. As such, a great amount of destruction of maritime assets occurred: six destroyers and other surface combatants were sunk, as well as a container ship and a dock-type landing craft, each of which operated as a helicopter carrier.²² This issue necessitates additional scrutiny, particularly in light of the realization that a considerable proportion of the munitions and Exocet missiles deployed by Argentine aircraft failed to achieve their intended efficacy for various reasons. Thus, if Argentine ammunition maintenance and attack aircraft operational methods had been improved, the damage inflicted on British forces in the sea and airspace around the Falkland Islands during the conflict would likely have been worse, and it is highly probable that securing sea control and landing operations by British land forces would have been difficult.

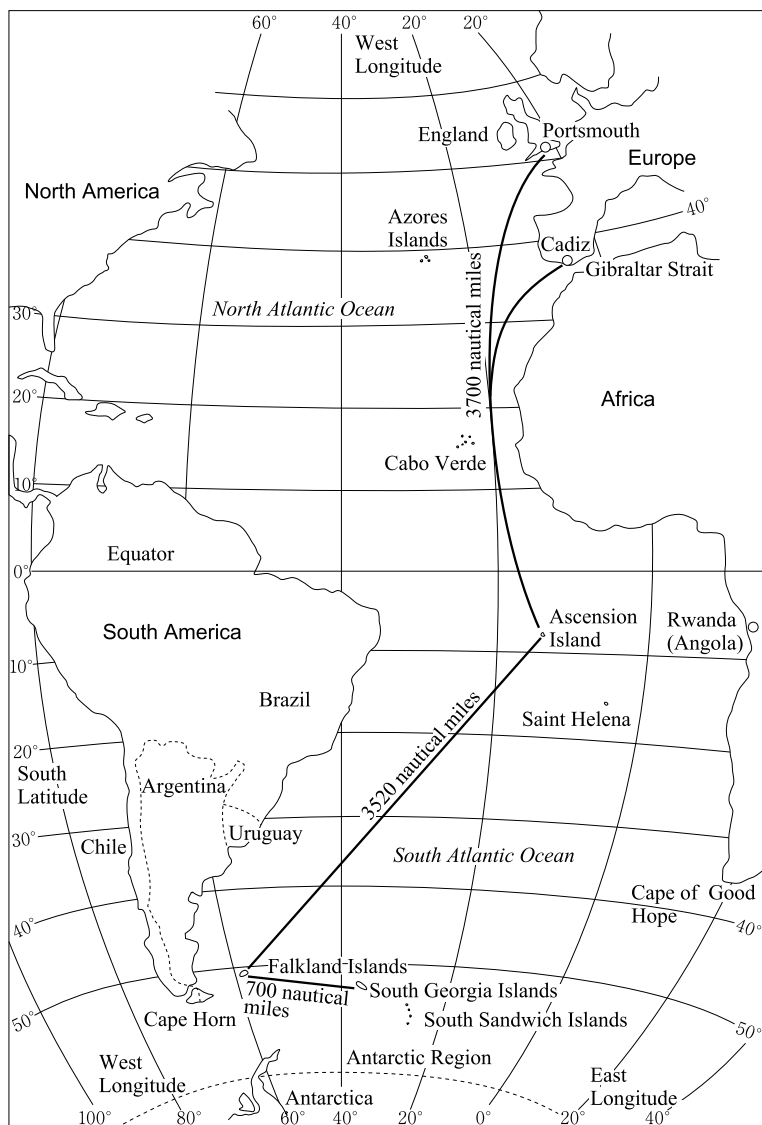


Fig. 6.1 Geographical relationship between the United Kingdom, Argentina, and the Falkland Islands. Source Motomi Hori, *Kaisen: Fookurando*, Hara Shobō, 1983, p. 15

On the other hand, the Argentine Air Force possessed about 180 fighter/attack aircraft such as the Mirage, Sky Hawk, and Super Étendard, giving it an overwhelming advantage in numbers over the British forces. However, the distance from the mainland to the Falkland Islands is roughly as shown in Fig. 6.2, and for Argentine aircraft, it was a remote area near the limit of their combat radius. The Argentine

military base in the East Falkland Islands was Port Stanley, which had an airfield but was limited to operating light attack aircraft converted from training planes. This is thought to be due to the lack of sea transport capability and construction vehicles and equipment on the Argentine side. Therefore, the operation of mainstay aircraft such as the Mirage had to be carried out from the Argentine mainland, and was affected by weather and other factors, making it impossible to take sufficient operational actions. In addition, it was impossible for the Argentinians to know the deployment posture of the British forces in advance, so it is likely that the situation did not allow for sufficient operational planning.²³

Therefore, it can be concluded that the British forces with superior but numerically inferior Harrier/Sea Harrier aircraft as a defense system for its surface vessels were only barely able to counter, due to factors such as Argentine's insufficient advanced planning for occupying the Falklands and the Argentine lack of an airfield capable of operating their mainline aircraft, resulting in the lack of sea transport capability and other capabilities.

In other words, both sides were operating without advanced search assets and command and control communications networks, such as extensive combat air patrols, early warning aircraft for friendly intelligence distribution, or reconnaissance satellites, and the British barely had the capability to win at this level of combat. Therefore, the British forces can be regarded as having lost the ability to conduct large-scale, modern sea-air operations in the maritime domain, except in the vicinity of the British mainland where they could receive support from ground-based air power such as early warning aircraft. In the U.S. Navy's *Maritime Strategy 1984*, it is stated that "in the Falklands, for example, the Royal Navy exhibited far lower fleet airborne early warning, air defense in depth, and damage control capabilities than will be required in global warfare with the Soviets."²⁴

Throughout almost the entire conflict, the British fleet was threatened by Argentine airplanes. On the other hand, although the Argentine Navy possessed a light aircraft carrier as well as several cruisers, missile destroyers, and other vessels, it took almost no concrete action. This was largely due to the fact that the gun cruiser *General Belgrano* was sunk by a torpedo from the British nuclear attack submarine *Conqueror* on May 2, shortly after the British fleet began its operational activities and, after this, Argentine vessels rarely sailed from their home ports, except for transports carrying supplies covertly. While the Argentine Navy was numerically superior in terms of air power, it did not have the capability to conduct modern anti-submarine warfare by taking advantage of its air superiority. As a result, the presence of Royal Navy submarines had the effect of containing the Argentine fleet in harbor. Therefore, the deployment of nuclear submarines to the waters around the Falkland Islands denied the Argentine fleet access to the sea and is considered to have functioned as area denial.

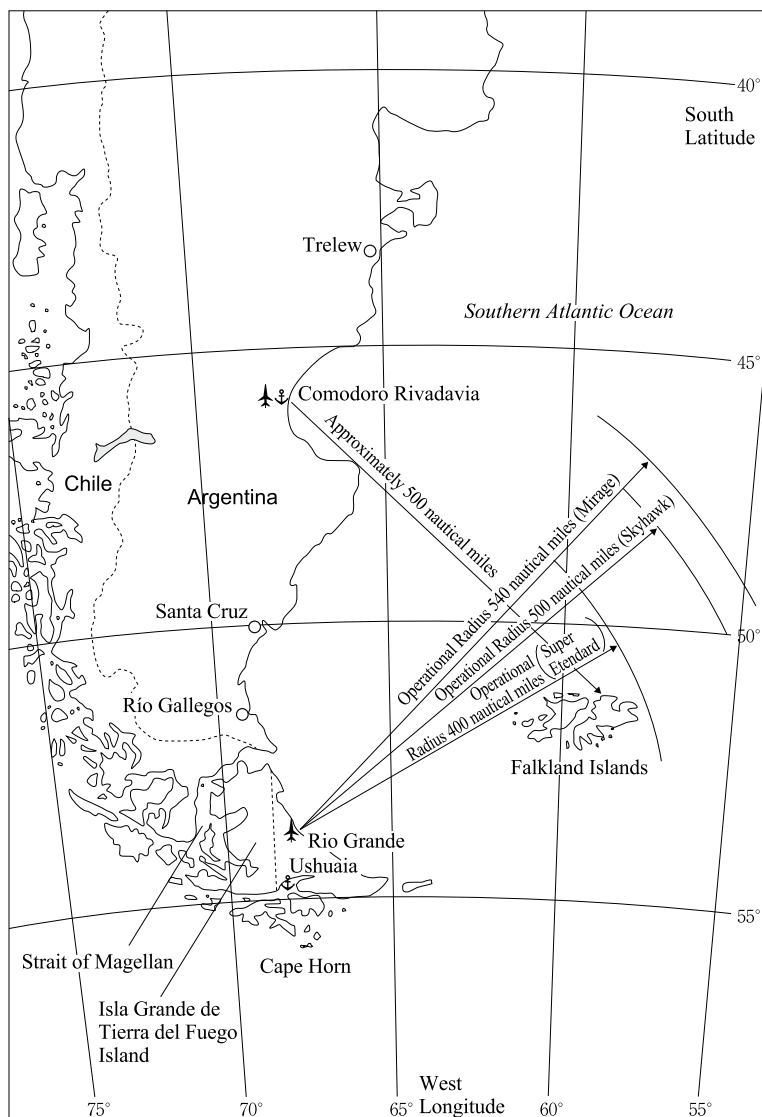


Fig. 6.2 Operational area of Argentine air force. *Source* Motomi Hori, *Kaisen: Fookurando*, Hara Shobō, 1983, p. 43

6.5 The Falklands War and Beyond (1983–2023)

In short, British military strategy in the maritime domain is to give priority to strategic nuclear forces or deployable forces in Europe and use its remaining maritime military resources for its blue-water navy. As a result, the United Kingdom's capabilities have

been greatly reduced, with respect not only to the sea control and power projection represented by the high-cost CTOL aircraft carrier, but also to the attack submarine, which should have proved its significance in the Falklands War for area denial. The reasons for this are, of course, complex and intertwined and it is necessary to observe the policy process within the United Kingdom and the British Ministry of Defense, but at least when looking at the United Kingdom as an actor from the outside it is difficult to believe that the Royal Navy has made any changes based on the lessons learned through the Falklands War. Rather, it should be regarded as having been forced to further reduce its size and capabilities in line with its financial size. This trend has remained unchanged in principle for almost half a century since the disarmament of 1968 and the decision to “withdraw from east of Suez.”

The Royal Navy, which maintained a reasonable global power projection capability while gradually reducing its size after World War II, has since sought to maintain a limited power projection capability, taking over the British nuclear strategy from the Royal Air Force and relying on the United States to control the sea in conventional forces. Since the implementation of the Nassau Accord in 1962, several events have occurred that have had a significant impact on the security environment for the United Kingdom, such as the Falklands War and the end of the Cold War. Despite this, British nuclear forces have consistently remained at four SSBNs. While the *Strategic Defence Review* (SDR) 1998 stated that “the annual cost (of maintaining Trident system and submarines) is little more than 3% of the defence Budget,” this number does not include the cost of research and development, nor the cost of construction itself.²⁵ As the delays in the construction of attack submarines and the repeated changes and cancellations of plans to build new aircraft carriers indicate, it is clear that the U.K.’s conventional forces have been severely degraded, and a decent level of resources are being preferentially allocated to the maintenance of strategic nuclear forces.

The SDR (1998) opens with an introduction by then Minister of Defense George Robertson, which states, “in the post-Cold War world, we must be prepared to go to the crisis, rather than have the crisis come to us. So we plan to buy two new larger aircraft carriers to project power more flexibility around the world.”²⁶ However, the CTOL carrier, which was to replace the *Invincible*-class, was not built at that time because the financial resources and operational concept were never agreed upon.

The 2011 *British Maritime Doctrine* included the statement that “the principles of British maritime power apply across the full spectrum of maritime activity which deliver the military tasks detailed by the government. Using Alfred T Mahan and Julian Corbett’s works, Ken Booth described a ‘trinity’ of 3 characteristic modes of action by which navies carry out their purposes: namely the military, the diplomatic and the policing functions.”²⁷ Officially, therefore, The Royal Navy aspires to possess the capacity to execute a “full spectrum” of operational tasks, rather than being constrained to capabilities suited for a limited set of missions.

Like the SDR (1998), the *British Maritime Doctrine* also mentions aircraft carriers, stating that “the Royal Navy’s *Queen Elizabeth* Class aircraft carriers will provide a substantial contribution to sea control, power projection and to the overall command and control of maritime operations.”²⁸ However, carrier construction was further

delayed. The *Invincible*-class light aircraft carrier was decommissioned in 2014 without a replacement being built, and the Sea Harrier, a symbol of integrated naval and air operations, also ceased operations in 2010. The *Invincible*-class's successor carrier finally began construction in the 2010s; the *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review* (SDSR) published in 2015 stated that sea trials for the first ship, *Queen Elizabeth*, were underway and that she would be commissioned in 2018, but *Queen Elizabeth* was actually commissioned in December 2017, and the second ship, *Prince of Wales*, was commissioned in 2019.²⁹ This suggests that sea control and power projection, which had been on the decline, may be on the way to recovery in the future.

Submarine forces also continued to decline over a long period of time. The *Astute*-class attack submarine, originally planned to replace the *Swiftsure*-class attack submarine (built between 1973 and 1981) was delayed in construction, and by 2008 the *Swiftsure*-class had been decommissioned before the *Astute*-class was commissioned. The first *Astute*-class submarine was commissioned in 2010 and, as of 2022, the fourth submarine of a planned seven-ship program had been commissioned.³⁰ The number of attack submarines has been reduced to about one-third of what it was over the past quarter century. Table 6.5 shows the five-year evolution of the Royal Navy's submarine warfare capability from 1990 to 2020.

With the end of the Cold War, the threat of Soviet naval power disappeared near Britain's home islands, so the total elimination of conventional submarines suitable for defending specific choke points such as the English Channel would be militarily rational to some extent. However, in addition to sea control or power projection, assets such as aircraft carriers, assault landing ships and attack submarines, which are effective not only for sea control but also for area denial, have been reduced as well, and this should be noted. As for area denial assets, no imminent threat has been expected to exist in the vicinity of the British mainland since the early 2020s. On the other hand, since various strategic documents such as the SDSR emphasize the protection of British territories and interests overseas, the reduction in the power of attack submarines—the significance of which should have been confirmed in the Falklands War—is thought to have a significant impact on the military strategy of the United Kingdom in the maritime domain.³¹

Table 6.5 Royal navy submarine ownership

Type of warship	1990	1995	Year 2000	2005	2010	2015	Year 2020
Strategic Submarine (SSBN)	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Strike Submarine (SSN)	17	12	12	11	8	6	6
Diesel propulsion submarine (SS)	11	—	—	—	—	—	—

Sources IISS, *The Military Balance 1990–1991*, pp. 83–84; *The Military Balance 1995–1996*, pp. 64–65; *The Military Balance 2000–2001*, pp. 80–81; *The Military Balance 2005–2006*, pp. 101–102; *The Military Balance 2010*, pp. 168–169; *The Military Balance 2015*, pp. 148–149; Prepared by author from *The Military Balance 2020*, p. 121

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Despite the fact that the need for large surface combatants or attack submarines continues to exist, as evidenced by the Armilla Patrol and the Falklands conflict, there have been repeated delays or changes in plans for the construction of them. While the strategic submarine/Trident system is being built as planned, there is no indication that the United Kingdom intended to improve its sea control and power projection capabilities until around 2010. What can be inferred from this is that, in the absence of an imminent threat to the United Kingdom, it maintained power projection “within its financial and capability capacity” based on the assumption of U.S. sea control. This suggests a kind of passive stance of using the latter in a manner consistent with its national interests.

Both the SDR 1998 and the *British Maritime Doctrine* articulate the imperative for naval power in safeguarding overseas territories, including the Falkland Islands, Cyprus, and Gibraltar, with the aim of upholding territorial sovereignty.³² These documents are oriented toward a “full spectrum” of power projection to meet a variety of missions, including those related to territorial integrity. The SDR (2015) lists as the primary missions of the British Armed Forces: “(1) defend and contribute to the security and resilience of the UK and Overseas Territories; (2) provide the nuclear deterrent; (3) contribute to improved understanding of the world through strategic intelligence and the global defence network; and (4) reinforce international security and the collective capability of our allies, partners and multilateral institutions; (5) support humanitarian assistance and disaster response, and conduct rescue missions, (6) conduct strike operations, (7) conduct operations to restore peace and stability, and (8) conduct major combat operations if required, including under NATO Article 5.”³³

The reality, however, is different. Under financial constraints, even after the end of the Cold War, the U.K. military has remained at the level of doing what it can to the best of its ability. As a result, it has been difficult to conduct not only high-intensity conventional wars, but even limited conventional conflicts at the level of the Falklands War. For a long time, the missions that British forces have been able to perform beyond the European theater have been limited to actions in low-intensity confrontations and conflicts, such as the Armilla Patrol, or power projection at the level of peacekeeping operations and peacetime disaster relief, or political presence and influence.

In conclusion, for the period under analysis, the United Kingdom had limited sea control capability in the waters surrounding the British mainland and in the North Pacific theater as a member of NATO, and globally as a complement to U.S. sea control. It also operates Tomahawk cruise missiles with surface combatants and maintains power projection capability only at the level of limited ground force deployment capability.

Thus, since the Cold War period, the United Kingdom should be regarded as having been oriented toward a maritime military strategy limited in terms of regional scale and capability. Since around 2010, however, it has been changing its resource allocation with the intention of restoring its own sea control and power projection capabilities once again. Furthermore, the United Kingdom left the European Union (EU) in January 2020, and in the process of setting up its “Global Britain” concept, it

is once again trying to steer a dynamic foreign and security policy.³⁴ Nevertheless, in this major shift in policy (intention), capabilities have yet to follow suit. The *Queen Elizabeth*-class carriers were briefly considered for conversion to CTOL carriers with additional equipment such as electromagnetic catapults. But this idea was abandoned and the power projection capabilities of the two carriers are limited relative to their size.³⁵ Moreover, as a result of years of fiscal austerity, the number of assets in the British military has not only been greatly reduced but is also in a state of flux. In 2021, *HMS Queen Elizabeth* CSG conducted long term deployment in the Indo-Pacific, but many of components of this CSG, escort destroyers/frigates and embarked F-35B aircrafts, are dispatched from several NATO allies.

In July 2023, Admiral Tony Radakin, chief of staff of the British Armed Forces, said, “only 40 [Challenger 2 main battle tanks] are ready to go to war...the Army is at its smallest since Napoleonic times. We were at 19 frigates and destroyers, which we subsequently reduced that 17 because some of those ships were very expensive, then got some maintenance and refit so it is probably 11 or 12 which are available to go out on operations.”³⁶ In the European theater, which is becoming increasingly unstable as the war in Ukraine drags on, British forces have been reduced to a critical level. Based on this analysis, the assessment of the U.K.’s maritime strategy according to this book’s analytical framework is shown in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6 Assessment of U.K. maritime strategy

	Late cold war (1980–1989)	Following the end of the cold war (1990–2023)
Area denial	3	2
Sea control	3	3⇒2
Power projection	2	2

Source Prepared by the author

Notes

1. Hattendorf and Swartz, “The Maritime Strategy, 1984,” p. 63.
2. Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery, Third Edition*, Fontana Press, 1991, p. xvi.
3. Ibid, pp. 398–399, 412.
4. Aaron Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895–1905*, Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 26.
5. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, p. 370.
6. Ibid., pp. 380–381.
7. Richard Rosecrance, *Defense of the Realm: British Strategy in the Nuclear Epoch*, Columbia University Press, 1968, p. 3.
8. U.K. Ministry of Defence, “Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1968, Note by the Secretary of State for Defence, January 29, 1968” (National Archives reference CAB 129/135/29), p. 286.
9. The term “V bomber” refers to three types of bombers with the initials V: Vulcan, Victor, and Valiant.

10. Lawrence Freedman, *Britain and Nuclear Weapons*, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1980, pp. 15–17. The Polaris system has now been replaced by the Trident system.
11. Snyder, “The Balance of Power and the Balance of Terror,” in Seabury, ed., *Balance of Power*, p. 200.
12. U.K. Secretary of State for Defence, *Strategic Defence Review*, July 1998, Factsheets Section, “Nuclear Deterrent.”
13. At the time of the Falklands conflict, the second ship had been completed and the third was under construction.
14. See Table 2.1 for the classification of these aircraft carriers with respect to their onboard aircraft operations.
15. However, the aerial maneuverability of the S/VOL aircraft worked beyond prior expectations in close air combat during the Falklands War, proving the superiority of the Harrier in aerial combat against the Mirage fighters of the Argentine Air Force. Throughout the conflict, a total of five British Harriers/Sea Harriers were shot down by Argentine anti-aircraft fire, but none were lost in aerial combat. Hori, Motomi, *Kaisen: Fookurando* (Sea Battle in the Falklands), Hara Shobō, 1983, p. 148. Regarding my discussion of Falklands War in this book, in general, I use Hori’s book to introduce the factual aspects of the war.
16. This may also be classified as sea denial by the British against the Soviet submarine force. See note 15 in Chap. 2.
17. Ikeda, Hisakatsu, and Shima, Atsushi, *Igirisu Kokubō Taisei to Guntai* (The British National Defense System and the Military), Kyōikusha, 1979, pp. 25–26.
18. U.K. Ministry of Defence, “Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1968,” p. 287.
19. Warren Chin, “Operations in a War Zone: The Royal Navy in the Persian Gulf in the 1980s,” in Ian Speller ed., *The Royal Navy and Maritime Power in the Twentieth Century*, Frank Cass, 2005, pp. 181, 188.
20. The Armilla Patrol continued until 2003, although its primary mission changed from merchant vessel escort to mine sweeping. U.K. Ministry of Defence, *Joint Doctrine Publication 0–10: British Maritime Doctrine*, 2011, pp. 2–8.
21. Dorman, Andrew Dorman, “From Peacekeeping to Peace Enforcement: The Royal Navy and Peace Support Operations,” in Ian Speller, ed., *The Royal Navy and Maritime Power in the Twentieth Century*, Frank Cass, 2005, p. 206.
22. To avoid detection at long range, current cruise missiles generally fly at low altitude until the time of terminal guidance, and these are called sea skimmers. If the missile flying altitude is 10 m and the sea level height of the search radar is 30 m, the sight distance at the radar horizon is $(\sqrt{10} + \sqrt{30}) \times 4.12 = (3.16 + 5.48) \times 4.12 \approx 35.60$ (km), and if the missile enters at 3 Mach = 1020 m/second, the distance from initial detection is about 34.9 s. If the missile enters at 3 Mach = 1020 m/second, it will hit the target in about 34.9 s from the time of initial detection.
23. However, there was a radar site on a mountain near the Argentine military base (Port Stanley) on East Falkland Island, and it is believed that some information on maritime and air targets around the island was reported.
24. Hattendorf and Swartz, eds., *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1980s*, pp. 67–68.
25. U.K. Secretary of State for Defence, *Strategic Defence Review*, paragraph 75.
26. *Ibid.*, paragraph 6.
27. *British Maritime Doctrine*, p. 2–7.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 3–19.
29. Government of United Kingdom, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*, November 2015, pp. 30–31.
30. Alex Pape, ed., *Jane’s Fighting Ships 2021–2022*, p. 860.
31. Government of United Kingdom, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, pp. 23–24.
32. However, the increased activity of Russian Navy submarines since around 2010 is thought to have been a factor in prioritizing the deployment of P-8 patrol aircraft.

33. Government of United Kingdom, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, pp. 27–29.
34. Government of United Kingdom, *Integrated Review Refresh 2023: Responding to a More Contested and Volatile World*, March 2023.
35. *Jane's Fighting Ships 2021–2022*, p. 862.
36. Mark Nicol, “Fight Russia? Britain has just 40 tanks and around a dozen frigates and destroyers ready to go to war—the lowest figures in modern times,” *Daily Mail Online*, July 5, 2023, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12264611/Britain-just-40-tanks-dozen-frigates-destroyers-ready-war.html>, accessed on September 5, 2023.

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Chapter 7

The Maritime Strategy of Japan: Area Denial Against the Soviet Union and China and the Pursuit of Sea Control



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The United States recognized the Soviet Union near the end of the Cold War and China since around 2010 as competitors in the maritime domain and focused its military expenditures on sea control to maintain its dominance. In the meantime, from the end of the Cold War through the Global War on Terrorism, i.e., from the early 1990s until about 2010, the United States prioritized power projection as a strategic approach to assert its influence and engage in international affairs. This strategy is predicated on the nation’s dominance over the maritime domain, which facilitates its capacity to intervene and become involved in the internal matters of other states. Such actions are aligned with the United States’ foreign policy objectives that are rooted in normative principles, including the promotion of freedom and democracy. Japan, with the United States as its sole ally, has shifted its military strategy in sync with such changes in the United States. After World War II, Japan made strategic defensiveness its national policy and relied on U.S. *extended deterrence* not only for its nuclear capability but also for its conventional power projection capabilities, such as carrier strike groups. Therefore, changes in U.S. security policy have a direct impact on Japan’s defense policy, especially in the maritime domain. On the other hand, the three documents collectively referred to as the “Three Security Documents,” namely the *National Security Strategy*, *National Defense Strategy*, and *Defense Buildup Program*, which were approved by the Cabinet in late 2022, indicate that Japan would like to promptly build a capability to counterattack in other

countries' territories, i.e., the ability to counter strike enemy bases. The Japanese government's intention is thus to significantly upgrade the capabilities of the Self-Defense Force (SDF) which has long been strictly limited to area denial within its own territory and sea control in the open seas.¹

Toward the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union's geographic proximity through the Sea of Japan, its modern command and control communications network, and its long-range attack aircraft and missiles were within range, placing the Japanese mainland within the Soviet Union's area denial. Therefore, even in the case of expecting extended deterrence by the United States, Japan needed to eliminate or at least offset the other country's area denial and maintain sea control as much as possible, thereby maintaining a foundation for the projection of American forces. In other words, an important strategic goal for Japan was, at the minimum, to prevent the Soviet Union, which had a strong maritime domain, from gaining the upper hand in the maritime domain by denying it its own domain, such as through air defense and anti-submarine warfare capabilities.

Since the end of the Cold War, Japan has expanded its security activities based on the global military superiority of the United States, especially in the maritime domain. In April 1991, after the Gulf War ceasefire was concluded, a Persian Gulf Minesweeping Task Force, consisting of a minesweeper tender, four minesweepers, and a supply ship, engaged in minesweeping operations in the Persian Gulf. This was the first overseas mission for the SDF since its establishment in 1954, and after discussions on contributions to the international community and the division of roles as a major power, the SDF began participating in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations (PKO), and also participated in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) efforts, including international emergency relief operations for the massive earthquake off Sumatra, Indonesia, and the Indian Ocean tsunami that occurred in December 2004. Furthermore, the SDF have engaged in maritime security operations in response to the identification of a vessel under suspicion, believed to be a North Korean spy boat, detected in the vicinity of the Noto Peninsula in March of 1999, as well as support missions in low-intensity conflicts and confrontations with non-state actors and developing countries; for example, support activities for the Coalition of the Willing engaged in the War on Terror under the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law enacted in October 2001. As seen from these operations, Japan's range of activities in the maritime domain has expanded dramatically since the Cold War.

In parallel with this expansion, the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) surface vessels have improved their self-contained capabilities, such as long-term open-sea deployment and air defense, and have also increased the number of large surface vessels with sea-basing capabilities, such as dock-type landing ships (*Ōsumi* type) and helicopter carriers (*Hyūga* and *Izumo* types).² In other words, since the end of the Cold War, the MSDF has been able to exercise sea control, to some extent autonomously, in remote areas or on the open sea, without relying on air cover by land-based air forces i.e., the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF). Moreover, the ability to project ground forces through things like helicopters and air cushion boats carried by large surface vessels has been expanding as well.

On the other hand, since Japan has maintained a policy of “exclusive defense oriented” posture, or strategic defense, the MSDF has so far (as of late 2023) no power projection assets that could be used in high-intensity warfare, such as conventional take-off and landing (CTOL) aircraft carriers and ground-attack cruise missiles. The ASDF likewise does not possess long-range bombers or air-launched long-range cruise missiles that could be used in a cross-sea strike, and its main assets are limited to interceptor fighters, ground attack aircraft engaged in close air support(CAS), or anti-aircraft missile systems.³ The ASDF has been operating early warning aircraft since 1987, toward the end of the Cold War, and has ground-attack precision-guided bombs, Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM), so it is not entirely free of land attack capability. Since 2008, the Self-Defense Forces have incorporated aerial refueling aircraft into their capabilities, which, when considered in conjunction with their collective assets, renders the prospect of conducting transoceanic offensive operations within the realm of possibility. However, as of 2023, the ASDF does not possess standoff electronic jamming (electric attack) aircraft, so it does not have the capability to continue operations through area denial with an advanced command and control communications network and air defense system. In other words, in principle, it can respond to high intensity combat only in the Japanese mainland and surrounding airspace, so it is appropriate to place it in the category of area denial.⁴ Thus, Japan’s sea control capability, until very recently, did not really exist other than the assets of the MSDF. It was only in the 2022 *National Defense Strategy*—that replaced the previously named *National Defense Program Guidelines* (NDPG)—which discussed “responses to attacks on islands,” that the ASDF’s operational activities in the maritime domain were clearly defined for the first time.⁵

Incidentally, since the National Defense Program Outline approved by the Cabinet in 1976, the main assets of the SDF have been numerically limited, as seen in its appendix. So it is possible to skeptically interpret the changes in the capabilities of major assets, etc., not in the context of military strategy, but as a part of Japan’s defense policy. Large and advanced or high valued assets have been procured, for instance, in accordance with the “bureaucratic” context—that of expansion of the defense budget in response to economic growth, or diplomatic needs to resolve Japan-U.S. trade friction. However, the introduction of individual assets is based on military rationality and discussions of the security environment at the time, so it is inappropriate to explain Japan’s defense capability solely in terms of policy or organizational factors. In this section, as in the case of the United States, the analysis is divided into three periods: the end of the Cold War, the post-Cold War period including the War on Terror, and the period after 2010, when China’s maritime expansion became a matter of concern.

7.1 Late Cold War: Area Denial and Sea Control Capabilities Against the Soviet Union (1980–1989)

As described in Chap. 2, in response to the Soviet Union's maritime bastion strategy at the end of the Cold War, the U.S. Navy's *Maritime Strategy* envisioned the attack on military bases in the Soviet Far East by projecting forces centered on aircraft carrier battle groups. Through the Japan-U.S. defense role-sharing talks, it was decided that the SDF would contribute to "sea lane defense," that is, the defense of the maritime domain within several hundred nautical miles around the Japanese mainland and sea lines of communications within a thousand nautical miles. Thereby the MSDF would complement American sea control by improving its offshore air defense and wide-area anti-submarine warfare capabilities.

Therefore, Japan basically looked to the United States for power projection, while the SDF focused on preventing the Soviet Union from establishing a defense zone in the Northwest Pacific from the Sea of Japan (based on the area denial strategy for the defense of the Sea of Okhotsk) while securing a base for U.S. forces to come to support Japan. Based on this thinking, the MSDF emphasized interdiction of Soviet surface vessels and submarines in the Sōya, Tsugaru, and Tsushima Straits, while the ASDF's main mission was to conduct air defense operations against Soviet aircraft entering the Pacific via the airspace around Japan. The Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) changed its conventional inland attrition strategy to a "Northern Forward Defense" strategy, which emphasized protection of Sōya and Tsugaru Straits and northern Hokkaidō, as well as providing coastal defense by introducing surface-to-ship missile units.

In the FY 1986 Defense White Paper (*Defense of Japan 1986*), the MSDF is described as "taking the lead in maritime operations, including: (1) operations for the protection of Japan's major ports and straits, (2) anti-submarine operations in surrounding waters, and (3) operations for protecting ships. U.S. naval forces, on the other hand, would: (1) support MSDF operations and (2) conduct operations including those which may involve the use of task forces providing mobility and strike power, with the objective of repelling enemy forces."⁶ With regard to air operations, the ASDF would continue to "take the lead in (1) air defense, (2) anti-airborne and anti-amphibious invasion, (3) close air support, (4) air reconnaissance, and (5) airlift."⁷

In addition, while the introduction of F-15 fighter jets and P-3C patrol aircraft was clearly stated from the beginning of the *Mid-Term Defense Program* in 1986, the program initially stated a call to "reexamine and take the necessary steps to enhance the performance of the surface-to-air missile system aboard the missile-equipped destroyers" with regard to the enhancement of offshore air defense capabilities.⁸ Later, in the FY 1988 *Defense White Paper*, it is stated that the "MSDF started developing, this year, a new type of destroyer with the AEGIS combat system" following the findings of the "Study Group for Air Defense at Sea" established within the Defense Agency. It was decided to improve offshore air defense capabilities by supplying the Aegis combat system developed by the United States.⁹

And so toward the end of the Cold War, Japan, with a contingency against the Soviet Union in mind, improved its area denial ability in the Japanese mainland and surrounding seas to maintain its base functions and industrial base, thereby enabling the U.S. military to project its forces. At the same time, Japan had the ability to complement the U.S. military to some extent in sea control, including air defense at sea with Aegis combatants and wide area anti-submarine capability with P-3C maritime patrol aircraft. The SDF possess capabilities that are, to a certain degree, complementary to those of United States forces in the area of sea control. On the other hand, because of political restrictions, the SDF during the Cold War had almost no capabilities for power projection. The ASDF possessed medium-size transport aircraft (C-1), and the MSDF had six medium-size landing craft with a full load of less than 3000 tons, but these alone could not be deployed to the open sea or outside their territory in times of war. In order to deploy land forces, platforms such as long-range attack aircraft, cruise missiles, and aircraft carriers equipped with these aircraft would be necessary, but Japan did not possess such ground attack capabilities. Therefore, it cannot be said that Japan was capable of continuously deploying ground forces outside its territory. Thus it should not be assessed as possessing a power projection capability.

7.2 Post-Cold War Era: Expansion of Area of Operations and Enhancement of Sea Control Capabilities (1990–2009)

With the end of the Cold War, the United States, as the sole superpower, gained overwhelming dominance in the maritime domain, and its ally Japan, like the United Kingdom, enjoyed the benefits of American control of the seas. In other words, U.S. allies had safe and easy military access to almost all of the world's maritime areas through U.S. sea control capabilities, which guaranteed "freedom of navigation" for their vessels.

As a result, Japan was able to shift much of its military resources in the maritime domain from the Cold War denial of maritime areas surrounding Japan to supplement U.S. maritime control, towards involvement in international conflicts, such as humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR), PKOs, or logistical support during the Global War on Terrorism. These represented tools to expand Japan's national interests.

One of the main reasons for the expansion of the SDF's area of operations in the context of contributions to international security was the political debate on the question of how Japan should contribute to the post-Cold War era's international community, a debate that was triggered by Japan's failure to adequately participate in support of the Gulf War. While the various missions of the SDF were politically determined based on normative criteria such as peace and stability in the international community, they also had the objective of realizing Japan's national interests and

demonstrating its political presence to other countries. Rear Admiral Takei Tomohisa, then Director General of the Planning Division, Maritime Staff Office, commented on the expansion of the MSDF's sphere of operations in the following way: "With the end of the Cold War, the possibility of a large-scale armed conflict decreased, and military power and alliances were forced to redefine their own significance. The Maritime Self-Defense Force is no different, and since the deployment of its minesweeping force to the Persian Gulf in 1991, the area in which it operates has expanded dramatically throughout the world."¹⁰

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the sources of instability around Japan have completely disappeared since the 1990s. North Korea's military capabilities beyond its maritime domain have been limited to illicit activities or special operations capabilities by means of spy boats, as well as including nuclear development and ballistic missile capabilities, which have been recognized as an obvious threat to Japan's security. Thus, since the 2004 *National Defense Program Guidelines*, ballistic missile defense has been included as an "means of defense."¹¹ In light of the circumscribed threats proximate to the mainland and strategic imperatives that include augmenting Japan's international influence through contributions to global initiatives—such as supporting the War on Terror—and, by extension, amplifying Japan's political stature, Takei and his colleagues endeavored to formulate a maritime defense strategy that aligns with the strategic intentions of the NDPG. Table 7.1 shows Takei's summary of the MSDF's 3-point strategy of (1) defense of the maritime domain surrounding Japan, (2) securing the freedom of use of the seas, and (3) contributing to a more stable security environment.¹²

It is clear from this that the MSDF, which has benefited from the maritime stability provided by the U.S. military and expanded its sphere of operations, has reflected Japan's engagement-based foreign policy strategy to shape the international community into a more desirable environment in line with Japan's national interests, just as

Table 7.1 Maritime self-defense force strategies in the Post-Cold war era

Strategic objectives	Commitment strategy	Contingency response strategy
Defense of the Seas Surrounding Japan	In order to prevent disputes, peacetime efforts should be made in Japan's territory, surrounding seas, and sea lines of communications	Efforts to eliminate the threat promptly in the event of deterrence failure
Ensuring freedom of use of the seas	Peacetime efforts in the surrounding seas and regions around major energy routes	Efforts to quickly eliminate threats around major energy routes in the event of deterrence failure
Contribute to developing a more stable security environment	In addition to the above two items, we will address transnational issues	

Source Takei Tomohisa, "Kaikyō Shinjidai ni Okeru Kaijō Jieitai (The Maritime Self-Defense Force in the New Maritime Era)," *Hatō*, Vol. 199, No. 1, November 2008, p. 3

the United States has done. As a result, the MSDF continuously deployed seagoing forces for logistical support in the so-called “War on Terror” for nine years, from 2001 to 2010, and for anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden for more than a decade since 2009 through till today. In addition, the MSDF has a certain degree of self-contained sea control capability, as evidenced by its continuous long-term deployment of surface forces in peacetime, including HA/DR for the 2004 Sumatra earthquake and tsunami disaster. And it has the capability to withstand high-intensity conventional warfare to a certain degree, including Aegis Combat System-equipped vessels. Although it does not possess a CTOL aircraft carrier, it can be described as having a sea control capability that can respond to a reasonably high-intensity environment.

7.3 China's Maritime Expansion: Reinvesting in Area Denial (2010–2023)

Since the 1990s, China has rapidly modernized its military power. Its objective is to form a strong area denial capability in the theater more than 1000 km away from its own coastline against Japan and the United States, and to secure military superiority locally. Against the backdrop of this improvement in its capabilities, China has taken an increasingly hardline stance in its foreign policy since around 2010, particularly with regard to territorial disputes over islands and surrounding waters in the East China Sea and South China Sea. Furthermore, military capability of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the maritime domain is not limited to area denial. It also includes the introduction of aircraft carriers and the construction of large surface combatants such as missile destroyers and large landing ships, which means that China is strengthening its sea control and power projection capabilities in the sea areas beyond the South China Sea, including the northwest Pacific east of the Philippine Sea and west of the Strait of Malacca.

With the emergence of a strategic environment similar to that near the end of the Cold War, Japan has once again faced the need not only to counter the strong area denial of neighboring countries and to maintain a base to undertake power projection by its ally, the United States, by strengthening its own area denial capabilities, but also to maintain sea lines of communications by increasing investment in sea control with the United States. The author, under the direction of then Chief of the Maritime Staff, Admiral Takei Tomohisa, wrote a report on the future strategy of the MSDF based on discussions within various sections of the MSDF which stated that the MSDF's strategic objectives have been: “(1) defense of Japan's territory and surrounding waters, (2) securing sea lines of communication, and (3) building a more desirable security environment,” and “Since the end of the Cold War, these priorities have been generally consistent.”¹³

On the other hand, the report noted, “in the period immediately after the end of the Cold War, when the ‘peace dividend’ was being touted, it was generally

recognized that there was no large-scale, imminent threat to the existence of Japan, and it was possible to place relative emphasis on ‘securing maritime transportation’ or ‘creating a more desirable security environment’ in an attempt to expand national interests...today, however, interstate conflicts similar to those seen during the Cold War are reemerging as a major issue for the international community.”¹⁴ The report subsequently posited the necessity of establishing a strategic stance analogous to the one observed at the end of the Cold War.

As measures to achieve these strategic objectives, the first was to secure “maritime superiority” in the waters around Japan, followed by “maritime denial” to prevent the other party from gaining maritime superiority.¹⁵ The response to these changes in the situation has gradually transformed the force structure of the MSDF. As indicated in the previous section, the U.S. Navy has shown the tendency to return to sea control again in its 2017 report, while the MSDF has also recovered the power of surface vessels since 2010. The number of “escort vessels” was set at about 60 in the appendix of the 1976 NDPG, about 50 in the next document, the 1995 NDPG, and then reduced to 47 in the 2004 NDPG. The number was subsequently set at 48 ships in the 2010 NDPG and increased to 54 ships in the 2013 NDPG and thereafter. In addition, regarding area denial, the number of submarines was increased from 16 to 22 in the 2013 NDPG and the 2016 NDPG stated that “the GSDF will maintain surface-to-ship guided missile units in order to prevent invasion of Japan’s remote islands while still at sea, as far as possible.”¹⁶ In line with this, measures such as the deployment of surface-to-ship missile units in the Nansei Islands, in response to the increased frequency of activities of Chinese naval surface ship units, are being promoted at the time of this writing.

Subsequently, on December 18, 2018, the NDPG was revised.¹⁷ A new *Mid-Term Defense Program* was formulated in conjunction with it.¹⁸ In addition, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, the Cabinet approved three *National Security Documents* in December 2022. In light of the escalation of the war in Ukraine and rising tensions in the Taiwan Strait, the government’s intentions regarding SDF operations and the SDF’s corresponding capabilities will change significantly over the next few years.

First, the most recent NDPG mentions that “Japan will take necessary measures to enable STOVL fighter aircraft to operate from existing SDF ships,” and the NDPG Appendix includes the note, “Fighter Aircraft Units (13 squadron) includes STOVL Units.”¹⁹ In line with this, the *Mid-Term Defense Program* (FY 2019–2023) notes, “SDF refurbish MSDF’s multi-function helicopter carrier destroyer (Izumo Class) after studying operations of STOVL aircraft,”²⁰ and after FY 2024, the ASDF plans to acquire 42 F-35B STOVL fighter jets.

The STOVL aircraft’s mode of operation is that its onboard aircraft is not catapulted but is launched solely by the thrust of its own aircraft and lands vertically after operational maneuvers. This is similar to the combination of the British *Invincible*-class light aircraft carrier and the Sea Harrier described in Sects. 3 and 4 of Chap. 6. In other words, STOVL aircraft cannot conduct long-range ocean-going attacks with the payload required for ground attacks because of the large amount of fuel consumed during takeoff and landing.²¹ Therefore, they are not force projectors, but rather they improve air defense at sea to a certain degree and, depending on the situation, allow

for a limited anti-ship attack capability. In addition, there is a statement in the *Mid-Term Defense Program* (FY 2019–2023) that the “SDF will also swiftly proceed with studies and R&D aimed at the procurement of standoff electronic warfare aircraft, high-output electronic warfare equipment, high-output microwave equipment and electromagnetic pulse (EMP) ammunition.”²² This improvement in electronic warfare capability at sea improves air defense capabilities at sea and contributes to sea control, as does the operation of STOVL aircraft.

In addition, the 2018 NDPG states that Japan’s “SDF will block invading forces’ access and landing from outside their threat envelopes” in response to the increased military capabilities of neighboring countries.²³ In order to realize this, the NDPG calls for the development of long-range standoff missiles.²⁴ This would allow Japan the ability to possess long-range precision strike capability for the first time. Although such equipment generally contributes to the improvement of power projection capabilities, these missiles, for the time being, are only intended for the defense of islands and other remote areas against high-intensity threats at sea and air. The intent, therefore, is to strengthen area denial.

Regarding the revision of the NDPG and the *Mid-Term Defense Program*, the domestic press at the time focused exclusively on the operation of STOVL aircraft by destroyers and discussed it from the perspective of “de facto aircraft carrier operations.” However, this is not an accurate understanding of the issue, even if one focuses only on the most visible assets suitable for a political presence. The aforementioned improvement of electronic warfare capability contributes greatly to sea control, and standoff missiles for territorial defense or unmanned aircraft operations in the air and undersea domains are useful assets for area denial.²⁵ Furthermore, instead of the conventional ballistic missile defense, “comprehensive air and missile defense capability” is to be built to “counter increasingly diverse and complex airborne threats of ballistic and cruise missiles and aircraft,” and this is a fundamental measure to strengthen area denial.²⁶ In conclusion, the 2018 NDPG and *Mid-Term Defense Program* (FY 2019–2023) are fundamentally intended to continue to improve Japan’s existing capabilities for both area denial and sea control.

Thus, at the time of the formulation of the 2018 NDPG, there was no change in Japan’s traditional policy of operating the SDF’s hard power solely for area denial and sea control. However, the three *National Security Documents* of 2022 indicated that the traditional policy of relying on purely defensive measures, such as ballistic missile defense, had reached its limits, and that Japan would begin to acquire and operate counterstrike capabilities.²⁷ At the same time, the defense budget was also significantly increased, but most of these spending increases were allocated to improving logistics, including ammunition stockpiles, improving the resilience of base functions, or addressing the space cyber domain and operating unmanned aerial vehicles—and not to significantly increasing the number of assets such as personnel, aircraft, and naval vessels. It is important to note that most of the investment is in qualitative changes, rather than quantitative increases in assets and personnel.

For example, the number of large surface vessels itself has remained consistent at 54 from the 2013 NDPG through the 2018 and 2022 NDPGs, with no increase or decrease in numbers. However, the inside story is that it would involve increasing the

number of vessels equipped with the Aegis Combat System to 12 as well as acquiring Tomahawk cruise missiles and other land-attack capabilities.²⁸ The GSDF will have a “Standoff Missile Unit” that will operate high-speed glide bombs and long-range guided missiles for island defense in addition to the conventional surface-to-ship missile regiments. In addition, the ASDF will operate stand-off missiles from 2024, as indicated in the 2018 NDPG, and will establish a new unit specializing in the space domain, and all three SDF branches will establish new unmanned aircraft units.²⁹ Although some details remain unclear, the 2022 *Defense Buildup Program* states that the system will be completed within approximately 10 years.³⁰ The SDF will have area denial ability in the seas surrounding Japan, and will also have the ability to attack military targets in the land domain, such as command facilities, missile launching bases, ports, and airfields.

7.4 Evaluation from the Perspective of Assets Held by the Maritime Self-Defense Force

So far, we have examined the transition of Japan’s military strategy in the maritime domain by classifying it into three periods. This section examines the transition of the MSDF’s major assets during the period under analysis. As already mentioned, the NDPG Appendix placed a ceiling on the number of assets, and the basic policy of strategic defense has restricted both the types and number of assets possessed by the MSDF and ASDF. Therefore, it is difficult to identify trends in military strategy in the maritime domain, such as area denial, sea control, and power projection, simply by following the numerical aspects. Therefore, in addition to the numerical transition, it is necessary to carefully observe the qualitative changes in comparison with the other countries analyzed. First, the number of major vessels of the MSDF during the period under analysis is shown in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2 corresponds, in principle, to the numbers of major equipment indicated by the Defense Program Schedule applicable to each year. On the other hand, Table 7.3 classifies destroyers with a full load of less than 3000 tons as frigates and distinguishes those with a full load of more than 3000 displacement tons based on the ship types shown in *Jane’s Fighting Ships*, or *The Military Balance*.³¹

Table 7.3 shows a rapid increase in the number of large surface combatant destroyers and cruisers from the end of the Cold War to the beginning of the twenty-first century, all of which were newly built and equipped with satellite communication

Table 7.2 Changes in the number of submarines, escort vessels, and landing ships

Type of ships	1985	1990	1995	Year 2000	2005	2010	2015	Year 2020
Submarine	14	15	18	18	16	16	18	21
Escort vessel	49	58	64	55	53	52	47	51
Landing ship	6	6	6	5	4	3	3	3

Table 7.3 Changes in the number of major maritime self-defense force vessels

Type of ships	1985	1990	1995	Year 2000	2005	2010	2015	Year 2020
Submarine	14	15	18	18	16	16	18	21
Helicopter carrier	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	4
Cruiser	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
Destroyer	31	42	44	42	44	44	34	39
Frigate	18	16	20	13	9	8	9	6
Landing vessel	6	6	6	5	4	3	3	3

Sources Prepared by the author from IISS, *The Military Balance 1985–1986*, Autumn 1985, p. 125; *The Military Balance 1990–1991*, Autumn 1990, p. 165; *The Military Balance 1995–1996*, October 1995, pp. 182–183; *The Military Balance 2000–2001*, October 2000, pp. 200–201; *The Military Balance 2005–2006*, October 2005, p. 280; *The Military Balance 2010*, February 2010, p. 409; *The Military Balance 2015*, February 2015, pp. 258–259; *The Military Balance 2020*, February 2020, pp. 281–282

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systems, tactical data links, and anti-aircraft missile systems.³² Although the MSDF does not have a CTOL carrier, which has limited capability, it can be seen as having improved its sea control capability to withstand high-intensity combat to a certain extent. However, since the overall number of surface combatants is limited to a constant number of “escort vessels,” the number of frigates with a full load capacity of 3,000 tons or less has decreased significantly as a result of the increase in the number of large surface vessels.

On the other hand, although the number of landing craft has been reduced by three since 1998, the actual force size can be said to have increased, as the number of landing craft has been replaced by six vessels, including the “Satsuma” type with a standard water capacity of about 2,000 tons, and the “Ōsumi” type with a larger hull size of 8,900 tons (about 14,000 full load displacement tons), more than four times larger. Importantly, the Ōsumi-class ships have been upgraded with three landing craft air cushion (LCAC) boats, and its landing capacity for troops and vehicles has been greatly improved compared to that of the Cold War period. With such assets as the Ōsumi landing craft, the *Hyūga* and the *Izumo* helicopter carrier, two of which have been in service since 2016, Japan’s sea basing functions have dramatically expanded, enabling the operation and maintenance of troops and aircraft while deploying to the open sea over long periods. From the perspective of such larger and more versatile assets, the MSDF possesses the capability to deploy ground forces supported by the ASDF or allied aerial coverage, even amidst moderately severe operational environments.

However, as of 2023, the MSDF’s capabilities are limited to landing troops and vehicles on the ground, and since it does not have ground-attack cruise missiles or ground-attack aircraft as indicated in the 2022 *Defense Buildup Program*, its power projection is useful not in high-intensity conventional warfare but in the lower tiers of the escalation ladder: from peacetime to low-intensity conflict. Nevertheless, it

is expected that the power projection capability will improve to a certain degree in the future in the process of establishing the system indicated in the three national security documents of 2022.

Therefore, if we assess the MSDF's sea control and power projection capabilities as of 2023, based on the context of this book, we can say with confidence that Japan intends to expand its national interests with a power projection capability capable of responding to low-intensity conflicts during peacetime, assuming that the United States' control of the maritime domain is stable, as well as Japan's supplementation of U.S. sea control. As of 2023, Japan's strategic environment is similar to that of the end of the Cold War and, as in the Cold War, the balance between investment in sea control and allocation to area denial will be crucial. The major difference, however, is the analytical issue of the extent to which the acquisition of a counterattack capability can be accompanied by a concrete improvement in power projection capability. Reflecting this analysis, Table 7.4 shows this author's assessment of Japan's maritime capabilities.

Table 7.4 Assessment of Japan's maritime strategy

	Late Cold War (1980–1989)	International contributions and expanding influence in the Post-Cold War Era (1990–2009)	China's maritime expansion (2010–2023)
Area denial	3	3	3
Sea control	2⇒3	3	3
Power projection	1	1	1⇒3

Source Prepared by the author

Notes

1. The “National Security Strategy,” “National Defense Strategy,” and “Defense Buildup Program” were decided by the National Security Council on December 16, 2022, and approved by the Cabinet on the same day.
2. In the Maritime Self-Defense Force, the “Ōsumi” class is considered a transport ship and the “Hyūga” and “Izumo” classes are considered escort ships, but for the purpose of comparative analysis with other countries, the names used in *Jane's Fighting Ships*, *The Military Balance*, etc. are used in this book.
3. The F-2 fighter is capable of anti-ship missile operations, but this does not mean that the ASDF does not possess maritime interdiction capability. However, it is clear that since the Cold War, its primary mission has been the prevention of aerial intrusions in peacetime and the defense of territory and airspace in a contingency.
4. The “strategic strike capability” discussed in Japan in response to North Korea's nuclear and missile development is a limited strike against missile launching bases, etc., and is a capability that corresponds to a so-called “surgical strike.” This capability is related to “counter force,” which eliminates the means by which the other party attacks itself, and is not related to “counter value,” which is a punitive deterrent from the standpoint of deterrence theory but falls into the category of denial deterrence.

5. “Heisei 23 Nendo Ikō ni Kakawaru Bōei Keikaku no Taikō ni Tsuite (The National Defense Program Outline for FY 2011 and Beyond),” Section V.1.
6. Defense Agency, *Defense of Japan 1986*, 1986, p. 99.
7. Ibid.
8. Defense Agency, *Defense of Japan 1987*, 1987, p. 113.
9. Defense Agency, *Defense of Japan 1988*, 1988, pp. 108, 146–147.
10. Takei, Tomohisa, “Kaiyō Shinjidai ni Okeru Kaijō Jieitai (The Maritime Self-Defense Force in the New Maritime Era),” *Hatō*, Vol. 199, No. 1, November 2008, p. 3. This article is reprinted on the website of the Maritime Self-Defense Force Staff College and is available for viewing at: https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/navcol/assets/pdf/column030_01.pdf.
11. “Heisei 17 Nendo Ikō ni Kakawaru Bōei Keikaku no Taikō ni Tsuite (The National Defense Program Guideline for FY 2005 and Beyond),” Security Council Decision of December 10, 2004, Cabinet Decision of the same date, Paragraph IV, 1.
12. Takei, p. 16.
13. Ushirogata Keitarō, “Kaijō Jieitai no Senryakuteki Hōkōsei to Sono Kadai (Strategic Direction of the Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Challenges),” *Kaikankō Senryaku Kenkyū*, Special Issue (No. 12), November 2016, pp. 25–26.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., pp. 28–29.
16. “The National Defense Program Guideline for FY 2014 and Beyond (Provisional Translation),” National Security Council Decision of December 17, 2013, Cabinet Decision of the same day, p. 22.
17. “Heisei 31 Nendo Ikō ni Kakawaru Bōei Keikaku no Taikō ni Tsuite (The National Defense Program Guideline for FY 2019 and Beyond),” National Security Council Decision, December 18, 2018, Cabinet Decision on the same day.
18. “Chūki Bōeiryoku Seibi Keikaku (Heisei 31 Nendo-Heisei 35 Nendo ni Tsuite, *Mid-Term Defense Program*, 2019–2023), National Security Council Decision, December 18, 2018, Cabinet Decision on the same day.
19. “National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2019 and beyond (Provisional Translation),” pp. 21,33.
20. “Mid-Term Defense Program (FY2019–2023) (Provisional Translation),” p. 10.
21. There are currently no promising candidates for early warning aircraft that can be installed on the refitted Izumo class (which can operate without a catapult), and in this respect the difference in capability between the “Izumo” and the CTOL carrier is very large, not only in power projection but also in sea control capabilities.
22. “Medium Term Defense Program (FY 2019–2023) (Provisional Translation),” p. 9.
23. “Heisei 31 Nendo Ikō,” p. 11.
24. “Chūki Bōeiryoku Seibi Keikaku,” p. 11.
25. The Mid-Term Defense Program indicates “maintenance of loitering unmanned vehicles (Global Hawk)” and “deployment of unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs) for oceanic observation and warning monitoring.” Ibid, pp. 9–10.
26. This can be considered to be synonymous with the concept that has been called integrated air and missile defense (IAMD) in the United States. See Ibid., pp. 19–20.
27. See the “National Security Strategy,” pp. 17–18.
28. “Chūki Bōeiryoku Seibi Keikaku,” p. 34.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. However, the editorial policy of each publication differs from year to year, and there are fluctuations in the classification of cruisers, destroyers, and frigates. For example, *The Military Balance* classifies the Hatsuyuki as a frigate or a destroyer, depending on the year of publication. In this book, the classification is based on full-load displacement, as mentioned earlier.

32. The “Hatsuyuki” class, which is a multi-purpose destroyer equipped with a domestically produced combat system (all ships will be removed from service by the end of 2021), the “Hatakaze,” “Asagiri,” “Murasame,” “Takanami,” “Akizuki,” “Asahi,” “Hyūga,” and “Izumo” (classified as helicopter carriers), “Mogami” (classified as frigates) and “Kongō,” “Atago” and “Maya” (classified as cruisers) equipped with Aegis combat systems.

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Chapter 8

Deciphering the Maritime Strategies of Land Powers



This chapter introduces case studies on three countries: Russia, India, and China. These countries are generally regarded as “land powers.” On the other hand, as mentioned in Chap. 1, even if we stick to the classification of “sea power vs. land power” in discussing contemporary military strategy, it does not involve a strict definition after all. It cannot be absolutely objective but will involve the subjective interpretations of the author or commentator.

The three countries (Russia, India, and China) differ regarding the national interests they possess in the maritime domain and how important they consider access to the maritime domain, or whether they perceive the maritime domain as an area of incoming threats and focus primarily on passively rejecting them or not. Given the dynamic nature of a nation’s military strategic goals, which fluctuate in accordance with alterations in the international arena and various other determinants, it becomes imperative to elucidate the corresponding evolutions in the nation’s strategic objectives within the maritime domain. The results of the analysis of the three countries in this chapter are even more varied than those of the three countries in Part II, and it becomes clear, at the very least, that designating these nations as land powers in the context of their military strategies is devoid of substantive significance.

For the Soviet Union, the Sea of Okhotsk and the Barents Sea were suitable for preserving strategic nuclear submarines and their second-strike capability was an extremely important factor in nuclear deterrence. Therefore, at the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union’s military strategic objective in the maritime domain was mainly a sea denial strategy (area denial) so as to maintain these sea areas and deny U.S. forces the ability to attack them. There has been no essential change in this situation since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, and it will probably remain unchanged through the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Russia, characterized by its abundant subterranean reserves, including natural gas, and its extensive territorial expanse, typically exhibits minimal reliance on maritime commerce facilitated by sea lines of communications. From a military perspective, Russia relies on nuclear forces in principle for its own power projection or military

power to confront a major power, such as the United States. Therefore, a major part of its military strategic objectives in the maritime domain converges on how to increase the survivability of the second-strike capability of its strategic nuclear submarines. As for conventional forces, the important strategic military objective is not about projecting power beyond the oceans into the domain of other nations, but rather denying the projection of U.S. and other forces through the maritime domain.

Since its founding, India has had territorial disputes with East and West Pakistan (Pakistan and Bangladesh) and China and has experienced several conflicts. Since the middle of the Cold War era, the United States has maintained relations with Pakistan and China, while India concluded the India-Soviet Peace and Friendship Treaty in 1971. Despite India's adherence to a comprehensive non-aligned diplomatic stance, the intensification of its relations with the Soviet Union could have been construed as having the potential to precipitate proportionate conflict with the United States. This situation gradually changed with the end of the Cold War. India-U.S. relations temporarily deteriorated due to India's nuclear tests in 1998, but her cooperation in the U.S.-led War on Terror from 2001 onward strengthened military cooperation between the two countries.¹ Moreover, India-U.S. military cooperation has rapidly strengthened since around the 2010s, mainly due to China's maritime expansion, which has become more prominent since the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Under these circumstances, India, which until around the end of the Cold War posed a major threat to Pakistan and confronted other states such as China and Bangladesh in the land domain, has been considered a typical land power. However, it is believed that its military strategy in the maritime domain is gradually changing under the influence of China, which is expanding beyond the Strait of Malacca into the Indian Ocean, and with the change in its relations with the United States. Toward the end of the Cold War, with the confrontation with the United States in mind, India emphasized area denial by submarines and other vessels as a countermeasure against U.S. Navy aircraft carriers, but in the twenty-first century, India, wary of China's maritime expansion west of the Strait of Malacca, has been focusing on sea control in the Indian Ocean. Since around 2000, the country has prioritized the construction of a fleet of large surface vessels such as aircraft carriers and missile destroyers as a way to undertake sea control, but it has also made progress to a certain extent in renewing its aging submarine force, with the commissioning of conventional-powered submarines restarted from 2017.

China, on the other hand, has been modernizing its military capabilities, mainly by strengthening its command, control, computer, communication, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) in order to "win the high-technology local war" since the Gulf War in 1991 and the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996. This has mainly taken the form of an area denial strategy called the anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD), which has focused on denying the United States and its allies the ability to project their forces into the region. However, China's military strategy in the maritime domain is not confined to area denial.

As China's rapid maritime expansion draws attention, there are many reports that explain China's military movements in the maritime domain by relating them all to being "part of the A2/AD strategy" in several news journals. However, this

is not accurate. In particular, after around 2010, the pace of new construction of conventional submarines, which are typical assets for area denial, has slowed down, and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has shifted emphasis to the construction of short take-off but arrested recovery (STOBAR) aircraft carriers and advanced missile destroyers equipped with phased array multifunctional radar, both of which constitute a sea control capability.

Consequently, China's strategic objectives are twofold: firstly, to deter the United States Navy from projecting power in the South China Sea and other potential conflict zones; secondly, to transition its strategic focus towards sea control, commencing from its current zone of influence to encompass a broader maritime region. Concurrently, there is a reallocation of its resources towards the enhancement of its power projection capabilities, as evidenced by the development of large amphibious assault ships and conventional take-off and landing (CTOL) aircraft carriers..

Thus, it is incorrect to assert that China's maritime military strategy is simple area denial, an attempt to prevent U.S. power projection. Clearly, even among the major countries generally regarded as land powers, their military strategic objectives and force composition in the maritime domain have different characteristics. Indeed, some of them are actually similar to those of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan, which were analyzed in Part II.

Note

1. Nagao Satoru, *Kenshō Indo Gunji Senryaku: Kinchō Suru Shūhenkoku to Pawaa Baransu* (Examining India's Military Strategy: Power Balance Among Tension-filled Neighboring Countries), Minerva Shobō, 2015, p. 229.

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Chapter 9

The Maritime Strategy of Russia: Consistent Area Denial and Limited Power Projection



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Occupying a vast area of the Eurasian continent, Russia has no shortage of food or underground resources in its territory and surrounding waters. Although it was threatened by Mongolian horsemen in the Middle Ages and Japan and China in the twentieth century, Russia's foreign and security policy has focused on geographically contiguous Europe, having been invaded by Napoleon's France in the nineteenth century and Nazi Germany in the twentieth. In this context, Russia (and its predecessor, the Soviet Union), is historically viewed as a "typical land power" in that "its overseas interests are generally minimal" and "the occurrence of military conquests or the arrival of threats have in principle originated on land."¹ Of course, "it is true that at times Russia had to exert military efforts against enemies, such as Sweden in the eighteenth century and Turkey in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but the threat never came via the distant open seas."²

Russia's geographical situation and underlying economic activities have not changed significantly since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and essentially there is no great need for Russia to actively expand into the maritime domain. The Soviet Union's maritime military strategy during the Cold War was not to gain superiority over the United States in the domain, but to place the greatest emphasis on the protection of strategic nuclear submarines (SSBNs) and their patrol areas. This aspect has not changed significantly from the end of the Cold War to the time of this writing. This is because, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the USSR's economy stagnated significantly, and it continued to be trailed by emerging powers such as India and China in terms of economic power, and there has been no major change in its system of relying on military power, especially nuclear power, as the source of its

power as a major power. As a result, in the maritime domain, Russia's conventional forces are generally designed to protect its own SSBNs and to prevent incoming power projection. However, this presence was only for a peacetime. Russia itself did not envisage itself competing with the United States for control of the seas far from its own territory. Furthermore, there is a strong possibility that Russia will become more dependent on nuclear forces because its conventional forces, mainly land ones, are depleted in the current war in Ukraine.

On the other hand, it is also true that Russia's maritime military power changed significantly in scale from before till after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Therefore, this section will analyze Russia's military power in the maritime domain by dividing it into three periods: the Cold War period, post-Cold War period, and subsequent period of power recovery.

9.1 Maritime Bastion Strategy in the Late Cold War (1980–1989)

In the early stages of the Cold War, the Soviet Union did not have the capability to confront the superior U.S. and British forces in the open seas, and the Soviet Navy's mission was merely to supplement surface forces and provide coastal security. Later, in the middle of the Cold War, SSBNs and the ballistic missiles mounted on them occupied an extremely crucial position in nuclear deterrence, and the Soviet Navy was transformed from an auxiliary force to a force "engaged in a truly strategic mission."³ However, this did not mean that the Soviet Navy became a force that could face the U.S. Navy head-on. Through Gorshkov's writings and others, Michael McGwire analyzed the Soviet Navy's force structure drawing similarities to the measures adopted by Imperial Germany and the Imperial Japanese Navy against the Anglo-American coalition, which was dominant in the maritime domain at the time. The Soviet Navy was not a self-contained navy like the U.S. one, but a "task-specific fleet" that concentrated on protecting SSBNs.⁴ As a specific example, it suffices to point out that the navy was in control of the Kuril Islands line, except for a part of it within Japanese territory, in order to make the Sea of Okhotsk, a strategic submarine patrol area, a "maritime bastion."⁵

Since the end of the 1960s, the construction of the *Yankee*-class and then the *Delta*-class strategic submarines, along with their onboard ballistic missiles, and the strengthening of their second-strike capability, made the likelihood of the mutual assured destruction (MAD) mechanism between the United States and the Soviet Union more certain. The preservation of the strategic submarine patrol area occupied an extremely high priority position in Soviet military strategy. While for the United States, demonstrating the ability to attack the "maritime bastion" where Soviet strategic submarines were hidden was of great significance in demonstrating superiority in long-term competitive strategy. Roger Barnett indicated the strategic priorities of the Soviet Navy as follows:

- (1) Defend Soviet territory from attack via the sea
- (2) If necessary, offensive missile attacks will be launched from submarines against enemy territory
- (3) Protect strategic missile submarines from enemy attack
- (4) Provide flanking support to Soviet ground forces. This is the primary mission of the Baltic Fleet and the Black Sea Fleet.
- (5) Attack enemy maritime traffic routes
- (6) Protect Soviet sea lanes⁶

Like McGwire, Burnett's analysis also considered that Soviet maritime military strategy focused on the protection of SSBNs, i.e., area denial, mainly by denying the incoming U.S. Navy. The strategic objectives related to sea control, such as the ability to attack and protect maritime transportation routes, are shown in (5) and (6) above, and were considered to have a relatively low priority.

However, from a numerical point of view, it is true that the Soviet Navy's strength expanded remarkably at the end of the Cold War. As of 1985, the number of large surface vessels such as cruisers, destroyers, and frigates, excluding aircraft carriers, was 200 for the United States and 175 for the Soviet Union, so it cannot be said that the Soviet Union was focused exclusively on area denial from a numerical comparison only.⁷ And as Admiral Gorshkov noted, "with the Soviet Navy venturing into the vast ocean, our vessels often called at foreign ports and came to play the role of 'plenipotentiary representatives' of the socialist countries. In the last three years alone [a total of] about one thousand Soviet vessels have visited sixty ports in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America."⁸ With the increase in the number and size of Soviet surface vessels, peacetime deployment in the open sea has been on the rise since the mid-Cold War.

However, the Soviet Navy was not able to develop a carrier battle group of CTOL carriers, capable aircraft, and escort assets, and thus had limited sea control capability outside the range of land-based radar sites and air cover by aircraft, i.e., in the open seas. Aside from its peacetime deployment and presence, it did not have the ability to wage a high-intensity conventional war with the U.S. Navy in a contingency.

Consequently, it should be understood that the primary strategic objective of the Soviet Navy was to maintain a persistent policy of area denial, thereby enabling its SSBNs to conduct patrol operations unimpeded (i.e., the preservation of maritime bastions). As indicated in Chap. 2, according to Gorshkov, the Soviet Navy was to be centered on submarine forces, with surface combatants and other vessels supporting and complementing the submarines. Even though large surface combatants such as *Kirov* or *Slava* Class missile cruisers, were estimated not to utilize sea control but to do area denial assets, with deploying around inner defense zone of sea denial strategy and conducting saturation missile strike against U.S. aircraft carrier vessel battle groups (CVBGs). A detailed study of Soviet Pacific Fleet exercises at the end of the Cold War also concluded that the Soviet Pacific Fleet was highly responsive and focused on anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-carrier warfare (ACW), and anti-surface warfare (ASUW).⁹ And in addition to naval vessels, the Soviet air forces and

naval air forces were also highly responsive. Air Force or Naval Air Force aircraft—primarily long-range attack aircraft such as the Tu-22 Backfire—were to be used to deny the U.S. Navy's approach and deployment of carrier battle groups or amphibious warfare readiness groups, which was based on the U.S. Navy's *Maritime Strategy*.

As of 1985, the Soviet Navy had 121 nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) and nuclear-powered guided missile submarines (SSGNS), 148 conventional submarines, more than 1000 attack and bomber aircraft of various sizes, 4700 interceptor fighters and other aircraft as air defense capability, and 9600 air defense missile launchers. These were controlled by a network of suitably advanced command and control systems, over the horizon (OTH) radars, satellites, and high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft, and had a powerful area denial capability in terms of both quality and quantity.¹⁰

Nevertheless, Soviet area denial at the end of the Cold War did not mean that it had enough local advantages to easily reject U.S. power projection. Soviet forces could not completely capture the U.S. fleet in the open sea at all times. Since the U.S. fleet concealed its position as much as possible by means of radiation mitigation measures during operational activities, it was difficult to continuously capture and track targets with the accuracy required for attacks using only satellites and OTH radar. Furthermore, when considering the operational range of United States carrier-based aircraft alongside the missile capabilities of Soviet maritime and aerial platforms, it becomes evident that Soviet forces would have encountered substantial difficulty in executing comprehensive stand-off attacks against the U.S. fleet. Consequently, it necessitated that manned aircraft engage with targets within a relatively close range.

U.S. aircraft carriers carry not only fighter and attack aircraft such as the F-14, F-18, and A-6, but also E-2 early warning aircraft, and by the mid-1980s, the U.S. military had the capability to make full use of these early warning aircraft and long-range search radars (carried by escorting Aegis cruisers and other vessels) to manage, rationally, tens or hundreds of anti-aircraft targets via tactical data links in the battle command system. Therefore, the U.S. military did not consider it a difficult mission to intercept Soviet attack aircraft with anti-aircraft missiles from out of sight, capturing them before they reached the missile launch point.¹¹ Maskim Tokarev, a former Soviet naval officer, pointed out the difficulty for the Tu-22 Backfire supersonic attack aircraft to carry out combat in the distant seas without the support of things like land-based air power, taking into account such U.S. military capabilities, and described this ocean crossing attack as a "one-way ticket."¹²

Nuclear deterrence worked throughout the Cold War, and a global conventional war between the United States and Soviet Union that the U.S. Navy cautioned about in its *Maritime Strategy* never broke out. But it should still be noted that the document envisioned that both sides would use long-range precision-guided strike power and that the war would be short, extremely costly, and intense.

9.2 Decline in Strength Since the Collapse of the Soviet Union (1990–2009)

In the last decade of the twentieth century, after the dismantlement of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia was in a period of economic stagnation and turmoil. During this period, the limited defense budget prioritized maintaining strategic nuclear forces. Conventional forces were drastically reduced and almost all procurement of new equipment was cancelled.¹³ From 1991 to the beginning of the twenty-first century, the number of submarines and surface vessels is estimated to have decreased by about 80 percent. This situation has generally been the case since 2000, when the economic situation stabilized to some extent.¹⁴ Table 9.1 shows the numbers of major U.S. and Soviet conventional forces in 1990, just after the end of the Cold War. As mentioned earlier, the Soviet Navy at the end of the Cold War surpassed the U.S. Navy in terms of the strength of its major surface combatant naval vessels, except for aircraft carriers.

On the other hand, Table 9.2 shows the force structure of the Russian Navy in 2015. As is clear from the table, there is an incomparably large difference in conventional forces between the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War and Russia today, and in a simple numerical comparison, their strength has been reduced to less than one-fifth. However, in terms of submarine warfare capability, from 1991 to 1999, when the Soviet Union collapsed, Russia, in the midst of financial difficulties, commissioned a total of twelve submarines—one *Victor III*-class strategic submarine, five *Akula*-class attack submarines, four *Oscar*-class SSGNs, two *Kilo*-class conventional submarines.

During the same period, a *Kirov*-class missile cruiser, an *Udaloy II*-class missile destroyer, and three *Sovremenny*-class missile destroyers were commissioned, for a total of five large surface vessels, giving priority to the renewal of submarine

Table 9.1 Number of major assets of U.S. and Soviet conventional forces in 1990

Type	U.S.A	(former) Soviet union
Attack and cruise missile submarines	90	114
Conventional submarines	1	128
Aircraft Carriers and Helicopter Carriers	14	5
Cruisers, Destroyers, Frigates	206	222
Major landing vessels	65	77
Land-based bombers	301	565
Interceptor fighters	3417	6650
Air defense missile launchers	-	Approximately 8650

Source Prepared by the author from IISS, *The Military Balance 1990–1991*, Autumn 1990, pp. 17–24, 33–40

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Table 9.2 Russian navy force composition in 2015

	North sea fleet	Baltic sea fleet	Black sea fleet	Caspian sea small fleet	Pacific fleet	Total
Strategic nuclear submarines	7				5	12
Nuclear cruise missile and attack submarines	17				9	26
Conventional submarines	6	2	4		8	18
Submarines total						56
Aircraft carriers	1					1
Nuclear-powered missile cruisers	2					2
Missile cruisers	1		1		1	3
Destroyers	4				4	8
Guided missile destroyers	1	2	1		2	6
Missile frigates		1				1
Frigates		6	2	2		10
Major surface vessels total						31
Small frigates	6		6		9	21
Missile boats	6	11	9	4	15	45
Patrol boats		7		4		11
Landing vessels	4	4	7		4	19
Small landing boats		2		1		3
Total auxiliary surface vessels						99

Source U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence, *The Russian Navy: A Historic Transition*, p. 16

forces.¹⁵ Subsequently, due to financial difficulties, almost all shipbuilding plans were cancelled or postponed, and from 2002 to around 2008, no major submarines or large surface combatants were upgraded at all.¹⁶

9.3 Priority of Area Denial in the Period of Strength Recovery (2010–2023)

Although the renewal of naval vessels has gradually resumed since 2010, it is believed that the Russian Navy has relatively prioritized submarine warfare capabilities over large surface combatant vessels from that point to the present. As for SSBNs, the deployment of the new *Borey* (*Borey* and *Borey-A*)-class began in 2013 and, as of 2023, five submarines were in service, replacing the aging *Delta III*-class SSBNs. Regarding SSGNs and SSNs, the first new *Yasen*-class (*Yasen* and *Yasen-M*) cruise missile submarine was commissioned in 2014, and three submarines have been deployed as of 2023.¹⁷ As for conventional submarines, the *Kilo*-class submarines were first commissioned in 2014, with one being produced yearly until 2017. The first of the new *Lada*-class submarines was commissioned in 2010, but the second and subsequent ones have been delayed.¹⁸

On the other hand, the pace of renewal of surface vessels, especially large surface combatants with a full-load capacity of over 3000 tons, has been slow; most of the vessels in service as of 2015 were commissioned in the 1980s at the end of the Soviet era, so they are over 30 years old and are aging rapidly. After the *Udaloy II*-class missile destroyer was commissioned in 1999, no new large surface combatants with a full load capacity of 3000 tons or more were built for 10 years until the second *Neustrashimy*-class missile frigate was commissioned in 2009, and no new surface combatants with a full load capacity of 3000 tons or more were built after 2009. The same is true for the period from 2009 to 2015.¹⁹

Excluding the *Udaloy II*- and *Neustrashimy*-class vessels just mentioned, the surface combatants commissioned during the 20 years from 1995 to 2015 were all small frigates (*Gepard*-class, *Steregushchiy*-class, totaling seven vessels) with a full load capacity of around 2000 tons.²⁰ These are not assets that contribute to sea control in the open seas. Although these medium-sized or smaller surface combatants are useful in low-intensity conflicts, such as the regional conflict with Georgia over South Ossetia in 2008 or the War on Terror, they cannot be equipped with full-scale air defense systems such as long-range air defense missiles or long-range air-to-air radar. Therefore, it is not possible to carry out high-intensity combat outside the range of air cover by ground-based air power. In April 2022, shortly after the start of the war in Ukraine, the *Slava*-class missile cruiser *Moskva* was sunk by an attack believed to be from Ukrainian-made Neptune anti-ship missiles, making it difficult for the Russian Black Sea Fleet to defend its fleet with long-range air defense missiles. As a result, it is estimated that the Russian Black Sea Fleet has been unable to conduct aggressive offensive operations in the Ukrainian coastal areas.

Since 2015, the Russian Navy has conducted several ground attacks against Islamic State (IS) strongholds in support of the Assad regime in the Syrian civil war. In October 2015, *Gepard*-class frigates and *Buyan-M* (*Buyan-M*)-class corvettes belonging to the Caspian Sea squadron carried out 26 cruise missile attacks against IS positions some 1500 km away.²¹ And in December that year, a *Kilo*-class submarine deployed in the Mediterranean Sea launched a ground-attack cruise missile attack

and a Tu-22 M Backfire bomber launched a ground attack against IS strongholds some 1500 km away.²² The attacks from both surface vessels and submarines were long-range precision attacks using onboard cruise missiles (3 M-54 Kalibr: NATO code name SS-N-30A) and can be classified as power projection assets. Therefore, the Russian Navy can be considered to have a certain degree of power projection in conventional forces as well as nuclear forces. However, these were attacks against a terrorist organization that had no sophisticated combat capability in the maritime domain, such as an anti-ship strike, and there was absolutely no risk of a counterattack in the execution of the operations. Therefore, this military action does not mean that the Russian Navy has the capability to fight for control of the sea in a high-intensity environment with air and anti-submarine threats outside the operational sphere of ground-based air power. In conclusion, the Russian Navy should be seen as having a limited power projection capability that can operate at a level below that of low-intensity conflicts, such as regional conflicts, civil strife, or the fight against terrorism.

Thus, from the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union to the writing of this book, the Russian Navy, in principle, emphasized nuclear deterrence and area denial as typified by the renewal of its submarine force, and it is unlikely that it intended to improve its sea control capability in the open seas with even a high-intensity conventional war in mind. As shown in Table 9.2, the number of large surface vessels was only 31 in 2015 and has remained at this “lowered” level since then to the present. *Military Balance 2023* shows that the Russian Navy has 31 major surface combatant vessels (aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers, and frigates), the same number as in 2015, half of which are aging vessels that entered service in the 1980s and 1990s during the Soviet era.²³ They consist of the following: *Admiral Kuznetsov*-class aircraft carrier (1 ship); *Kirov*-class missile cruiser (1 ship); *Slava*-class missile cruisers (two ships, excluding the sunken *Moskva*); *Sovremenny* class missile destroyers (3 ships); and *Udaloy I/II*-class missile destroyers (8 ships).

And from 2015 to 2023, only five large surface combatants were commissioned: two *Admiral Gorshkov*-class frigates with a full load of 4500 tons, the *Talwar*-class missile frigates exported to India for the Russian domestic market, and the *Admiral Grigorovich*-class frigates with a full load of 4500 tons.²⁴ The other large surface combatants were mostly built in the 1980s and 1990s during the Soviet era. They are around 30 years old and, despite having undergone some refurbishment, are aging and their onboard systems are becoming obsolete. Therefore, the current situation should be understood as an attempt to halt the decline in capability to some extent by refurbishing aging equipment rather than a focused attempt to strengthen sea control.

The *Stregushchiy*-class frigates (and their modified versions) are still under construction but, as mentioned above, although they have a full range of armaments, including ship-to-air missiles and anti-ship cruise missiles, their hulls are considerably smaller than those of other vessels with similar armaments.²⁵ As a result, it is estimated that this class of frigate has a smaller ammunition, fuel, and food load and smaller freshwater desalination capacity than large surface combatant ships of other countries. Thus its ability to conduct long-term operations in the open sea is considerably limited.

This tendency to prioritize area denial over open sea deployment and sea control also applies to air power, with regard to the Russian Air force and naval air forces. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the MiG-35 and the Su-35 have been standardized as successors to the multi-role fighters designed in the Soviet era, such as the MiG-29, Su-27, and Su-30. These are not pure interceptor fighters but have some land attack capability. However, they do not have the payload capacity to carry things like large anti-ship missiles and are primarily an asset that contributes to area denial. Furthermore, Russia is continuously developing land-based long-range air defense missile systems such as the S-300 and S-400, and some have described these developments as Russia's version of anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) strategy. According to such reports, these trends are part of the modernization of the Russian armed forces, triggered by the lessons learned from the 2008 conflict with Georgia. That is to say, the "A2/AD bubble" consisting of air defense missile systems in the Black Sea area centering on Kaliningrad and Sevastopol is an attempt to restrict the military strength of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).²⁶ Figure 9.1 shows the range of Russian area denial assets deployed in Kaliningrad.²⁷

The operational reach of the S-400 series air defense missile system is illustrated herein. It is postulated that Russia possesses sufficient capabilities to effectively inhibit NATO's force deployment in emergent situations. This supposition is predicated on the coverage of Russian area denial assets, which extend into parts of Poland and Sweden, thereby complicating access to the Baltic states, particularly in the context of strategic military movements.

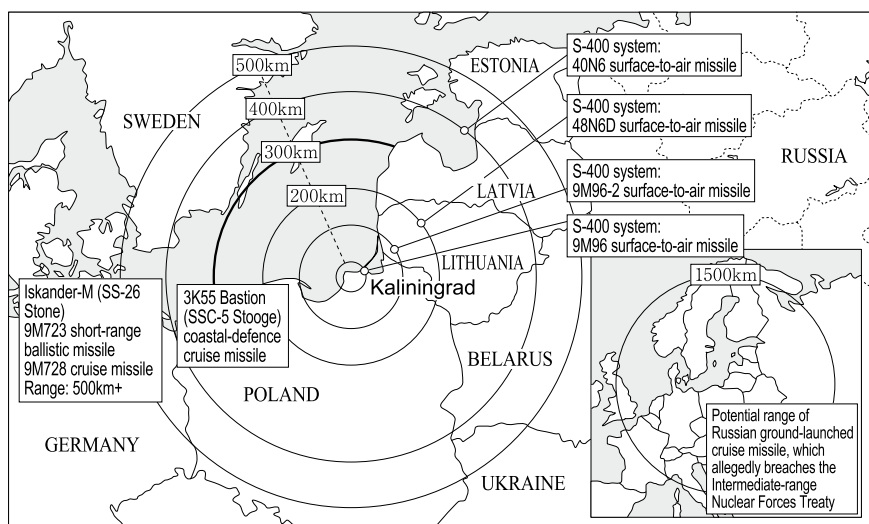


Fig. 9.1 Russian military area denial assets in Kaliningrad and impact on neighboring countries. Source IISS, *The Military Balance 2017*, February 2017, p. 185. ©2024, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, originally published in *The Military Balance 2024*, (reproduced with permission)

While priority investment has been given to area denial, modernization of assets such as the supersonic long-range bomber, which is an important asset for power projection, has not been updated. The current Tu-22 M Backfire was basically designed in the 1970s, but its new successor has not emerged yet as of this writing. While the modernization of the Tu-160 M Blackjack, a core asset of the nuclear strategy, and a project by Tupolev to develop a next-generation stealth bomber (the PAK DA) have been discussed, there is no indication that these plans will materialize.²⁸ The current economic sanctions imposed by the West in the wake of the war in Ukraine will make it difficult to continue acquiring high-end semiconductors and other advanced aeronautical assets in the foreseeable future.

The Soviet Union's deployment of long-range bombers have functioned as a component of area denial strategy, effectively deterring the advance of U.S. Navy carrier battle groups within the maritime theater. Additionally, these assets have not solely been confined to a defensive posture but have also served in a capacity as power projection. This is evidenced by their utilization during the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan and in protracted-range terrestrial assaults on terrorist factions. The modernization and renewal of forces capable of such long-range ground/ship attacks has not materialized, and from the point of view of the priority given to the modernization of fighter aircraft, it is clear that the Russian military is placing the same emphasis on area denial as it did at the end of the Cold War.

However, Russia's major revenue is from weapons exports, and it can be assumed that Russia is prioritizing the development of promising weapons and equipment for foreign sales. Although it is beyond the scope of this analysis and will not be touched on in this study, a more accurate analysis of this point, especially the process of modernization and improvement of air power, requires an examination that includes not only Russia's own military strategic goals but also the needs of its arms export market.²⁹

9.4 Russia's Strategic Military Objectives

Through the analysis so far, it is clear that Russia has given relative priority to area denial rather than sea control in the maritime domain. In addition, since around 2010, the pace of modernization and renewal has been gradually recovering, and it has also been operationalizing limited power projection. However, as a result of the loss of ground forces in the war in Ukraine, it is highly likely that the renewal of conventional forces used in the maritime domain will be delayed, as the Russian military is likely to deepen its reliance on nuclear forces and devote more of its resources to rebuilding its land forces in the future. In the twenty-first century, Russia has often published official strategic documents, but almost no description of its military strategy in the maritime domain can be found in those materials.

The *National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation to 2020*, published in 2009, is a top-level strategic document that covers not only the military, but also economic, technological, and resource areas.³⁰ As such, the document is somewhat

limited in its description of the purely military sphere, but in the twelfth paragraph, it discusses military threat perception. The military threats described are the “proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear materials, or conventional weapons,” the “increase in the number of nuclear powers,” and the “undermining of global or regional strategic stability through the deployment of U.S. global missile defense systems in Europe.”³¹ This statement suggests that Russia places a high priority on nuclear forces or nuclear deterrence.

Russia has also published a document entitled *Federal Military Doctrine*. This is generally considered to be equivalent to the U.S. national military strategy. *Russia's New Military Doctrine*, published on February 5, 2010, lists the “Main External Military Risks,” pointing to: (1) the approach to Russia's borders by the expansion of the NATO bloc, (2) the decline in strategic stability accompanying the deployment of missile defense systems, (3) the deployment of other military forces in the vicinity of Russia and its allies, and (4) the threat to Russia and its allies.³² This doctrine was revised in December 2014, but the description in the section, “Main External Military Risks,” is, in principle, the same as in the 2010 edition.³³

Thus, both documents place the “proximity to the borders of Russia and its allies in the context of NATO's eastward expansion” at the top of the list. In addition, the documents consistently refer to domestic nationalist movements, such as the conflict in Georgia, as a “threat that exists within the country” declaring such to be acts of separatism or terrorism, and similarly warn against domestic separatist forces and intervention and support by European countries and others against them as a concern for territorial integrity. They emphasize the deterioration of strategic stability due to the deployment of missile defense systems by the United States in countries surrounding Russia as a military threat. Russia undertook a revision of its *National Security Strategy* at the end of 2015, wherein it articulated the stance that the support rendered by the United States and the European Union to the regime-opposing movement in Ukraine precipitated significant schisms and militarized conflict within Ukrainian society. This perspective pertains to the events surrounding the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, among other contemporaneous developments. The hardline approach towards Ukraine can be fundamentally interpreted as a securing strategic depth in the land domain.

Regardless of the appropriateness or legality of the claims made in Russia's military strategy, it is clear that throughout the various strategic documents, Russia's security, military interests, and strategic objectives are consistently categorized under the following three points, all of which are related to nuclear deterrence and the land domain:

- (1) U.S. missile defense systems affect the mechanism of mutually assured destruction, which impedes the nuclear capability on which Russia depends and the strategic stability this provides.
- (2) NATO's expansion to the east would hinder Russia's strategic verticality and is unacceptable from the standpoint of security.
- (3) Domestic separatist forces will not be tolerated.

In other words, at the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union emphasized as an important strategic objective the prevention of the arrival of U.S. military forces through the maritime domain, and this emphasis on area denial has continued even after the Cold War. Since its military power was greatly reduced following the end of the Cold War, Russia did not have enough power to confront the United States in the maritime domain in the first place. Furthermore, while there seems to have been a slight recovery in its area denial and power projection capabilities since around 2010, the majority of its military strategic objectives are related to nuclear deterrence and the land domain.

It is noteworthy that the war in Ukraine, commencing in February 2022, is anticipated to exert a consequential influence on the evolution of Russia’s maritime military strategy. In addition to needing to replenish the loss of land forces, Russia will have to rely more heavily on nuclear forces as the inferiority of its conventional forces vis-à-vis NATO becomes more apparent. Moreover, the port of Sevastopol on the Crimean Peninsula is within range of Ukrainian missile forces, and the port, along with docks and other repair facilities where naval vessels undergo repair, are being damaged. Furthermore, with the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO, the Baltic Sea will be surrounded by NATO members, making it extremely difficult for the Russian Baltic Fleet in Kaliningrad to move into operational action in the event of a contingency. In light of the operational constraints imposed on Russian military bases in the Black Sea and Baltic Sea as a consequence of the Ukrainian conflict, it can be deduced that Russia lacks the requisite capabilities to secure maritime control beyond proximate zones to its own territory in the foreseeable future, and that it faces a grim prospect in terms of reversing this strategic impasse.

Table 9.3 shows the author’s assessment of Russia’s maritime strategy based on the analysis in this chapter.

Table 9.3 Assessment of Russia’s maritime strategy

	End of the Cold War (1980–1989)	Post-Cold War economic poverty (1990–2009)	Military force restructuring after circa 2010 (2010–2023)
Area denial	4	3	3
Sea control	4	2	2
Power projection	3	2	3

Source Prepared by the author

Notes

- 1. Gray and Barnett, eds., *Seapower and Strategy*, p. 299.
- 2. Ibid.
- 3. Ibid., p. 319.

4. McCgwire, *Military Objectives in Soviet Foreign Policy*, p. 107.
5. Ibid, p. 171.
6. Gray and Barnett, eds., *Seapower and Strategy*, p. 319.
7. IISS, *The Military Balance 1985–1986*, Autumn 1985, pp. 9, 24.
8. As the book was published in 1972, the phrase, “the last three years” probably refers to the period of 1970–1972. Gorshkov, *Russian and Soviet Naval Strategy*, p. 229.
9. Kerr, *Eyeball to Eyeball: US & Soviet Naval & Air Operations in the North Pacific, 1981–1990*, p. 28.
10. IISS, *The Military Balance 1985–1986*, pp. 21–28.
11. “Rationally” here means avoiding “overkill” in a chaotic combat environment, where a single target is shot by multiple missiles, resulting in unnecessary loss of ammunition, or missing an enemy missile due to confusion over which target is intercepted by multiple assets. This is meant to avoid such cases.
12. Tokarev, “Kamikazes: The Soviet Legacy,” *U.S. Naval War College Review*, Vol. 67, No. 1 (Winter 2014), p. 71.
13. IISS, *The Military Balance 2000–2001*, October 2000, p. 111.
14. U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence, *The Russian Navy: A Historic Transition*, December 2015, p. vi.
15. Stephen Saunders, ed., *Jane’s Fighting Ships 2014–2015*, IHS, 2014, pp. 676–698.
16. It generally takes 5–10 years from the time of design, through construction and commissioning, for a naval ship to be completed. Some of the vessels already under construction in the 1990s were commissioned amid a struggling economy. No new navy ship construction projects, however, were undertaken during this period. As a result, it can be inferred that no new commissioned ships were in service in the early twenty-first century.
17. IISS, *The Military Balance 2023*, February 2023, p. 186.
18. Saunders, ed., *Jane’s Fighting Ships 2014–2015*, pp. 676–698. The commissioning of the second and later *Lada*-class ships is believed to have been delayed due to problems with their electric propulsion systems. See U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence, *The Russian Navy*, p. 19.
19. Note that the first *Neustrasimui*-class ship was commissioned in 1993. See Saunders, ed., *Jane’s Fighting Ships 2014–2015*, p. 695.
20. Ibid, pp. 686–701.
21. TASS, Russian News Agency, “Caspian Flotilla ships fire 26 cruise missiles on IS targets in Syria,” October 07, 2015, 14:48, <http://tass.com/defense/826919>, accessed on April 27, 2017.
22. U.S. Defense News, “Russian Submarine Hits Targets in Syria,” December 9, 2015, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/breaking-news/2015/12/08/submarine-russia-kalibr-caliber-cruise-missile-syria-kilo/76995346/>, accessed on April 27, 2017.
23. IISS, *The Military Balance 2023*, pp. 186–187.
24. The construction of several ships was cancelled because the gas turbine engines to be installed in the Admiral Grigorovich class were not available due to the economic sanctions imposed in the wake of the military invasion of Crimea, etc. See U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence, *The Russian Navy*, pp. 22–23.
25. Ibid. The *Steregushchy*-class frigates are 106 m in length and have a full load capacity of 2200–2500 tons. Missile frigates and destroyers of roughly equivalent armament from Japan, NATO countries, or China are generally 130 m in length with a full load capacity of 3,000 tons or more.
26. Luis Simón, “The ‘Third’ U.S. Offset Strategy and Europe’s ‘Anti-access’ Challenge,” *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (2016), pp. 429, 433–434. However, with the prolonged war in Ukraine, air defense capabilities on the Crimean Peninsula are being considerably eroded by Ukrainian forces.
27. If Belarus is in the Russian sphere of influence, ground access between the Baltic states and NATO countries would be limited to a very narrow corridor on the Polish-Lithuanian border east of Kaliningrad (the Sławki Gap), and Russia’s area denial would be severely limited in the event of a contingency.

28. IISS, *The Military Balance 2023*, pp. 158–159.
29. Russia's arms exports declined after the collapse of the Soviet Union but recovered after 1998, and since 2005 it has been the second largest arms exporter in the world after the United States. See Yamazoe Hiroshi, *Kokusei Heiki Shijō to Roshia* (International Arms Market and Russia), Yuurashia Bukkureto (Eurasia Booklet), No. 195 (May 20, 2014), pp. 5–9.
30. "Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020," approved by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation, No. 537, May 12, 2009, as translated using the following website: <http://rustrans.wikidot.com/russia-s-national-security-strategy-to-2020>, accessed on April 28, 2017.
31. Ibid, paragraph 12.
32. "The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation," approved by the Russian Federation Presidential Edict on February 5, 2010, Chap. 8, as translated by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf, accessed on April 28, 2017.
33. "The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation," approved by the Russian Federation on December 25, 2014, No. 2976, Chap. 12, as translated using the following website: <https://www.theatrum-belli.com/the-military-doctrine-of-the-russian-federation/>, accessed on April 28, 2017.

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Chapter 10

The Maritime Strategy of India: From Typical Land Power to Sea Control of the Indian Ocean



Contents

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Since its founding in 1947, India has followed the principle of omnidirectional diplomacy and has maintained a nonalignment foreign policy that does not depend on any particular country. According to David Brewster, “through much of the Cold War, India used its position as a leader of the nonaligned movement to exert considerable ideological influence over newly independent India Ocean states in an effort to persuade them against entering into alliances with extra-regional powers.”¹ On the other hand, India itself has been involved in wars or military conflicts with neighboring countries since shortly after its founding. The founding of India as a Hindu-majority nation itself in a region with many Muslim countries has raised a variety of issues due to geographical and religious factors. In particular, India is sandwiched between East and West Pakistan (Pakistan and Bangladesh), which were founded by Muslims, and the First India-Pakistan War and other wars broke out immediately after the founding of India over the possession of Kashmir and other territories.

According to Nagao Satoru, India had waged 28 wars or military operations between its founding and 2010.² These conflicts were caused by a variety of factors, including territorial, religious, terrorist, or nuclear test-related conflicts, most of them with bordering East and West Pakistan or China. While some ground operations were conducted in parallel with landing operations by naval vessels, almost all of these operations were conducted in principle on land. Chapter 2 of India’s *Maritime Military Strategy*, published in 2007, is titled “Implications of Recent Maritime History,” and includes the Second Indo-Pakistan War in 1965 and the Third Indo-Pakistan War in 1971. These were not military operations limited to the maritime

domain, but rather were assault landings and submarine operations that accompanied the ground operations.³

Of the 28 military operations, only two cases involved military action across the ocean—the Sri Lankan intervention in 1987–1990 and the Maldivian intervention in 1988—in addition to counter-piracy operations. The Sri Lankan intervention and the Maldivian intervention were both in support of the governments of both countries against the armed uprising of Tamil forces. Therefore, India did not take any military actions in the maritime domain against state or non-state actors. Thus, India's military activities have been mostly due to confrontations with bordering states, and in the few cases where India has acted beyond the maritime domain, it has been as part of a political intervention in the other state, rather than a military operation in the maritime domain.⁴ From this perspective, there is no problem in considering India as a military land power from the end of the Cold War to the end of the twentieth century.

Incidentally, at the end of the Cold War, the United States suspended military and economic assistance to India in the wake of the Third India-Pakistan War, while maintaining a cooperative relationship with Pakistan. As a result, India and the United States can be said to have been in a potentially adversarial relationship. After the end of the Cold War and following the imposition of economic sanctions on India in response to its nuclear tests in 1990s, the United States and India strengthened their strategic ties by building a cooperative relationship amid the Global War on Terrorism. Until then, India's strategic military objective in the maritime domain was to deny America's power projection as well as that of direct adversaries such as Pakistan.

In the twenty-first century, globalization and the rapid economic development of the Asia-Pacific region have made the Indian Ocean strategically important as a maritime transportation highway. According to Robert Kaplan, "here, too, are the principal oil shipping lanes, as well as the main navigational choke points of world commerce—the Strait of Bab el Mandeb, Hormuz, and Malacca. Forty percent of seaborne crude oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz at one end of the ocean, and 50% of the world's merchant fleet capacity is hosted at the Strait of Malacca, at the other end, making the Indian Ocean the globe's busiest and most important interstate."⁵ However, to the west of India, there are Middle Eastern countries that are constantly plagued by terrorism, piracy, and political instability. Thus, and in order to maintain economic development in the region and take advantages from globalism, particularly through maritime commerce, it is in India's (and other nations') vital interest to preserve the integrity of the extensive maritime trade routes traversing the Indian Ocean.

In addition, given its strategic relationship with the United States, China, and other countries, it is not enough to regard India as a typical land power, because it is necessary for India to make a positive commitment to the maritime domain in the process of its development. India is "a subcontinent nation, closed to the north by the Himalayas, and its borders with Pakistan, Nepal, and Myanmar are not stable. It is difficult to say that India has established good diplomatic relations with many of its neighbors. Therefore, the only place where India can effectively project its power

is the open Indian Ocean to the south...Moreover, India is located in the middle of a major sea lane from the Strait of Hormuz to the Strait of Malacca.”⁶ In the multipolar world following the end of the Cold War, the strategic importance of India and the Indian Ocean is rapidly increasing.

As China’s military power expands against the backdrop of its rapid economic development, especially in the maritime domain, the United States, Japan, and many Southeast Asian countries affected by this expansion are naturally planning to strengthen their strategic relationship with India. As Robert Kaplan has pointed out, “the geography of the Indian Ocean region, with its multiple pipelines and intersecting terrestrial and maritime transportation routes, leads not to a Kantian ‘post-nationalism’ world, but to a Metternichian balance of power politics.”⁷ In the multipolar world of the early twenty-first century, India and its sphere of influence, the Indian Ocean, are gaining strategic significance, especially in conjunction with the maritime expansion of a rising China.

In addition, while India has been at loggerheads with China over the ownership of its territory since its founding, namely Tibet, China is indispensable to India’s economic development as a major trading partner. Some experts argue that “India does not want to be actively involved in a balancing strategy against China since the latter is becoming its main trading partner.”⁸ Turning to the maritime domain, however, India is wary of China’s expansion of its area of activities beyond the South China Sea into the Indian Ocean, and it is also concerned about the possibility of military cooperation with Southeast Asian countries.⁹ This trend has become even more evident since the Sino-Indian military clash in the Galwan Valley in Kashmir in 2020, and India has shown a willingness to respond to China’s maritime expansion west of the Strait of Malacca while controlling the Indian Ocean.

India has had military conflicts with Pakistan, China, and other countries mainly in the land domain, but at the same time, as a regional power in South Asia, India also has an element of sea power, committing itself to the Indian Ocean as a maritime transportation highway and to the stability of the states scattered in the Indian Ocean. In this chapter, we will analyze India’s military strategy in the maritime domain by dividing it into three periods. The next section looks at the period from the end of the Cold War to the beginning of the twenty-first century when India was in potential confrontation with the United States. Subsequent sections look at the periods 1989 to 2009, and 2010 to 2023.

10.1 Potential Confrontation with the United States and Strengthened Area Denial (1980–1989)

As mentioned earlier, India’s military strategic threats since its founding have been centered on the land domains of Pakistan and China, so that India’s dependence on maritime trade via sea lines of communications was low in proportion to its own economic strength. Because of its low level of industrialization, India was devoid of

the requisite elements to progress its military capabilities in the maritime sphere. Post the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962, there seems to have been a preferential augmentation of the army and air force in the nation's military modernization process.¹⁰

After the Second Indo-Pakistan War in 1965, the need to improve naval power was discussed in India, and "in September 1965, India signed a contract to import naval vessels from the Soviet Union on a large scale, and in 1968, the Chief of staff of the Indian Navy was granted admiralty rank for the first time, the army, navy, and air forces were treated as equals, and the navy developed two Eastern and Western fleets. Yet, the sea lanes to be defended were also of little importance, and thus Indian Defense Minister Swaran Singh was opposed to the creation of a blue-water navy."¹¹ It can be said that at this time, India's interest in the maritime domain was quite low.

With the outbreak of the Third Indo-Pakistani War in 1971, the United States withdrew its military materiel and economic assistance to India and deployed the USS *Enterprise* aircraft carrier vessel battle group (CVBG), (which was engaged in Vietnam War) to the Bay of Bengal instead, that is, until January 7, 1972, after the ceasefire.¹²

Although the United States did not clearly explain its intentions in deploying the CVBG, it is assumed that the purpose was to check the escalation of the war or to exert political presence in the Indian Ocean in response to the deployment of the Soviet Navy.¹³ On the other hand, regardless of U.S. intentions, as a result, "the USS *Enterprise* incident in 1971 promoted a temporary shift in the Indian Navy's strategic focus towards one of sea denial."¹⁴ Thereafter, until the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union often deployed naval vessels in the Indian Ocean to expand its influence, while the United States in the 1980s used the British-owned Diego Garcia as a base, strengthening its sea control and power projection capabilities. After the United Kingdom, the former colonial ruler of India, ceded its superiority in the maritime domain to the United States and decided to withdraw strategically from the east of Suez in 1971, the two superpowers competed for a presence in the Indian Ocean.

Regardless of what the United States was intending, the Indian side saw its strengthening of sea control and power projection in the Indian Ocean as a phenomenon accompanying the deterioration of relations between it and the United States. According to Nagao, India placed increasing importance on the maritime domain after 1971, and especially from the late 1980s, when the United States began basing in Diego Garcia, the Indian naval buildup became quite apparent.¹⁵ Although the remarkable economic growth of India from this period is considered to be another factor, the Indian Navy's submarine force has been growing at a rapid pace since the 1980s, with the number of Indian submarines increasing from eight in 1980 to 19 in 1990, including one attack submarine.

Although the number of aircraft carriers has increased from one to two, this trend is remarkable when compared to the gradual quantitative decline in the power of large surface combatant vessels larger than frigates, which was 30 in 1980, 26 in 1985, and 25 in 1990. Table 10.1 shows the change in the number of major Indian naval vessels from the end of the Cold War to the period immediately after the end of the Cold War.¹⁶ Thus, from the 1970s through the end of the Cold War, India placed relatively

Table 10.1 Changes in the number of major Indian Navy vessels from the end of the cold war to the immediate post-cold war period

Type of warship	1980	1985	1990
Nuclear attack submarines	–	–	1
Conventional submarines	8	8	18
Aircraft carriers	1	1	2
Destroyers, frigates, etc	30	27	25
Landing ships	1	9	10

Sources IISS, *The Military Balance 1980–1981*, Autumn 1980, p. 68; *The Military Balance 1985–1986*, Autumn 1985, pp. 122–123; *The Military Balance 1990–1991*, pp. 160–162
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more emphasis on its naval power than it had before and sought to strengthen its naval forces. There are two contexts behind this. Initially, in its engagements with Pakistan—a nation historically in contention with India—there was an imperative for the enhancement of amphibious operation capabilities to effectively project forces in support of ground campaigns. The second is the strengthening of area denial, which arose as the U.S. Navy strengthened its presence in the Indian Ocean. As U.S.-India relations cooled, the Indian Navy recognized the U.S. Navy as a potential threat.

As shown in the increase in the number of landing craft in Table 10.1, power projection by the Indian Navy focused on landing ground troops by landing craft in flank support of the ground war across the border with Pakistan. It was not intended to carry out operations such as a large-scale land attack combined with the display of firepower by carrier-based aircraft or large surface combatant vessels. On the other hand, area denial was based on a suitably powerful equipment system: in the short five-year period from 1985 to 1990, two *Shishumar*-class submarines, an export type of the German Type 209 conventional submarine, and seven *Shindhughosh*-class submarines, an export type of the Soviet *Kilo*-class submarines, were introduced, making a total of nine.

On the other hand, the two aircraft carriers in service as of 1990 were both retired British light aircraft carriers, equipped with British Sea Harrier light fighters and Soviet helicopters. As far as this equipment system is concerned, it had little use as a force projector but could contribute to coastal sea control in the conflict with Pakistan. Similarly, the number of surface combatants above the frigate level had been gradually decreasing, despite efforts to increase their size and modernize and renew them. As a result, they are not at a level to compete with the U.S. Navy in terms of sea control. The sea control strategy of the Indian Navy was conceptualized to facilitate the advancement of amphibious operations and ancillary missions, thereby securing a tactical edge in conflicts against Pakistan. Despite contemporary standards, the Navy’s capabilities did not rise to the level necessary for engaging in high-intensity combat scenarios that demanded sophisticated command, control, and communications systems. Furthermore, its operational scope was constrained by a

reliance on auxiliary forces such as ground air support, and it was not equipped for sustained, independent operations in the vastness of the open sea.

In the 1980s, the Indian Air Force introduced five new types of aircraft (Jaguar, Mirage 2000, and MiG 23/27/29), eliminating the older aircraft, and thus modernizing and updating itself at once.¹⁷ Of these, the MiG is basically characterized as an interceptor fighter. On the other hand, the Jaguar's main mission is to provide close air support for ground troops, but it is also capable of anti-ship missile attacks. The Mirage is a multi-role fighter-attack aircraft and can be equipped with various types of bombs or Exocet anti-ship missiles. However, the size of both the Jaguar and the Mirage is relatively small, and their ammunition and fuel payloads and radius of operations are insufficient for operations in the vast Indian Ocean. Considering these points, it is thought that the Indian Air Force's capability is primarily intended to support land operations and air defense against Pakistan and China. Furthermore, its anti-ship attack capability is also at the level of supporting Indian naval forces in landing operations against Pakistan, which are mainly land-based operations. Since the Indian Air Force did not possess any long-range attack aircraft that could cross the ocean to attack enemy fleets in the open sea, we can conclude that the Indian Air Force at the end of the Cold War did not have the capability to project forces in the maritime domain, and its contribution to sea control is considered to have been very limited.

10.2 Post-Cold War Era: Enhancing Sea Control Capabilities in the Indian Ocean (1990–2009)

Since the end of the Cold War, U.S.-India relations have improved rapidly and as a result of China's maritime expansion, their strategic interests have coincided and they have been strengthening military and security ties in the maritime domain into the twenty-first century. In the Gulf War of 1991, India allowed multinational forces to pass through their airspace, and the following year, 1992, military cooperation between India and the United States resumed, which led to bilateral talks and joint exercises between their military organizations.¹⁸ As a result, "the term 'nonalignment' retains a considerable degree of emotional currency in India, although its modern-day use often bears little resemblance to Nehruvian doctrine...by the end of the 1990s the dominant emphasis in Indian strategic thinking had settled on building a new partnership with the United States as part of a multidirectional engagement with other major powers."¹⁹

As mentioned above, the development of the U.S.-India relationship began with the Gulf War, and the cooperative relationship continued while the United States itself moved forward with the Global War on Terrorism. In the process, Islamic extremist terrorist organizations, who were reportedly causing the Mumbai terrorist attacks in 1993 and 2008, began to hide in Pakistan. At the same time, the United States had begun mediating the military tensions between India and Pakistan.²⁰

Since then, the U.S.-India relationship has continued to strengthen as India, wary of China's rapid economic growth and military development, especially its advances in the maritime domain, and the United States with its "Asian rebalance" and "Indo-Pacific strategy," have agreed on their strategic interests. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, against the backdrop of globalization and its own economic growth, India has gradually increased its strategic interests in the Indian Ocean from a typical land power to a sea power in the twenty-first century, and the share of the navy in India's total defense budget has increased significantly from 11% in 1992–93 to 18% in 2008–09.²¹ The subtitle of the *Indian Maritime Military Strategy* is "Freedom to use the Seas," and includes the statement that "the new strategy recognizes that influencing events on land is one of the primary roles of the Indian Navy." It also devotes a chapter to maritime domain awareness (MDA) which includes a description of the Indian Navy's investment in shipborne and ground-based long-range unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and early warning aircraft (AEWs).²²

This situation does not solely reflect the Indian military's assimilation of sophisticated military technologies such as command, control, computer, communication, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems; rather, it signifies a strategic shift in India's naval capability. The focus has transitioned from an area denial posture vis-à-vis the United States to one of sea control and power projection within the Indian Ocean, a recalibration aimed at safeguarding its maritime interests. Brewster introduces the comment by the Indian Chief of Naval Staff as to the Indian Navy's primary role to "manifest destiny to control Southern Asia and the Indian Ocean sea-lanes."²³ Similarly, David Scott argues that "the strategic background for India is Mahanian-style seapower through control and access to key points, be it territorial possession or secure access, bringing with it power projection."²⁴ In other words, "the Indian Navy now sees itself as destined to be the predominant maritime security provider from the Red Sea to Singapore."²⁵ Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, India has thus undergone a strategic policy shift from area denial with the United States in mind at the end of the Cold War, to exercising sea control and power projection in the Indian Ocean. In this context, around 2020, India is the key member of Quad—a security alignment by Australia, Japan and the U.S. that plays an active role in the Indo-Pacific region. As one example, Indian Armed Forces are keen on committing to various bi/multilateral military exercises such as Malabar, Varuna and Al-Mohamed Al-Hindi and so on.

Nagao explains this trend using the number of large surface vessels owned by the Indian Navy, as shown in Fig. 10.1. As shown in Table 10.1, from the end of the Cold War to the end of the twentieth century, there has been a discernible decrement in the quantity of surface combatants exceeding the size of frigates within the Indian Navy's fleet composition. Conversely, there has been a sustained increment, particularly post-1990, in the class of surface combatants with a full load displacement of 3000 tons or greater, capable of extended operational tenures and equipped with an array of autonomous systems, such as air defense mechanisms.

While submarines, which are an area denial asset, have been aging, renewal of surface combatants has been a priority since the late 1990s, and in 2022, the domestically built short take-off but arrested recovery (STOBAR) aircraft carrier *Vigraant*

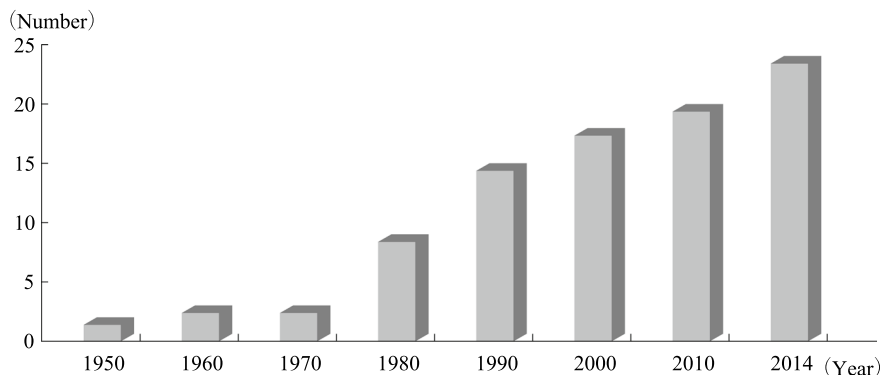


Fig. 10.1 Number of large surface combatant vessels in the Indian Navy. *Source* Nagao Satoru, *Kenshō Indo Gunji Senryaku: Kinchō Suru Shūhenkoku to Pawaa Baransu* (Examining India's Military Strategy: Power Balance Among Tension-filled Neighboring Countries), Minerva Shobō, 2015, p. 297

was commissioned after overcoming various technical challenges.²⁶ This improvement in sea control capability is highly consistent with India's foreign policy. The Narendra Modi Administration has made a comprehensive commitment to the entire vast Indian Ocean region based on the concept of "SAGAR" as part of its foreign policy, and it is likely to continue to invest in maritime control capabilities in the future.²⁷

In addition to these assets, in 2001 the Indian Navy established a combined land, sea, and air headquarters in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands at the outlet of the Strait of Malacca, and has naval berthing and communications facilities in Maldives, Seychelles, Mauritius, and Madagascar.²⁸ In particular, the deployment of military forces on islands such as the Andamans or the Seychelles is considered to be a functional enhancement with China's expansion in mind.

Concomitantly, the fiscal allocation for the Indian Air Force has exhibited a nearly uniform trajectory of expansion commencing from the 1990s. In addition to promoting modernization, the Indian Chief of Air Force Staff has stated that the Indian Air Force "is covering the region from the Strait of Hormuz to the Strait of Malacca," and thus it can be assumed that the Indian Air Force is interested in projecting its forces across the entire Indian Ocean. It is also said that it is proceeding with base expansion in Tajikistan and is planning to deploy Sukhoi 30 (Su-30) aircraft to its command post in the Andaman Islands.²⁹

However, "India has rarely conducted air-led military operations in the past, so it is unknown how capable it would be if it left army-led operations and proceeded with air-led operations," and thus, it is believed that "if it cannot move away from following army operations, the Indian Air Force's operations will inevitably remain within and around South Asia."³⁰ It is not clear how much the Air Force will be able to expand its operational activities in the maritime domain in the future.

Table 10.2 Force composition of the Indian Air Force in 2020

Role	Model	Number of units possessed
Air superiority fighter	Sukhoi 30MKI	255
	MIG 29	62
Multirole aircraft	Mirage 2000	49
	Other	177
Light fighter plane	Tejas	16
Attack aircraft	Jaguar (Panthera onca)	115
Total		674

Source IISS, *The Military Balance 2020*, February 2020, p. 273
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Ashley Tellis, in his 2011 report, estimates that the Indian Air Force’s mainstay will continue to be “medium multi-role combat aircraft” as of 2020, and argues that many of the newly introduced assets are simply modernized and updated versions of the aircraft of the late Cold War period.³¹ Table 10.2 shows the major assets of the Indian Air Force in 2020, and as Tellis had speculated, does not show any change in force composition that would be associated with an increase in power projection capabilities, such as the ability to conduct large-scale sea-crossing attacks. In addition, given the current situation of prolonged confrontation in the Sino-Indian border region of Kashmir, the Indian Air Force will likely need to devote much of its resources to supporting the Army on land for the foreseeable future. Hence, considering the force structure of the Air Force alongside the prevailing dynamics between China and India, the prospective operational proficiency of the Indian Air Force within the maritime theater is anticipated to be relatively limited.

10.3 Reacting to China’s Maritime Expansion (2010–2023)

Thus, since the end of the Cold War, India has increased its strategic interest in the maritime domain from the Strait of Hormuz or the Red Sea in the west to the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea in the east. Since the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962, China has maintained friendly relations with Pakistan, which has served as a base for maintaining a certain degree of influence in the Indian Ocean region.³²

In addition, in the twenty-first century, China has strengthened its economic and political ties with countries surrounding the Indian Ocean, such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. In particular, China is seen as pursuing a “String of Pearls” strategy of developing commercial ports in key locations in the Indian Ocean, such as Gwadar in Pakistan and Hambantota in Sri Lanka, establishing hubs in times of peace.³³

However, all these ports are located in remote areas from the Chinese mainland, and there is no way for China to secure supply routes in the event of an emergency. As Brewster argues, “the PLAN cannot currently conduct a full-scale joint forcible entry operation, maintain maritime superiority out of area, conduct multicarrier or carrier strike group operations, or provide comprehensive protection against threats to an out of area task force (antiaircraft warfare, ASW, and antisurface warfare),” and it is unlikely that it will have these capabilities in the near future.³⁴

Yet, it is also clear that the Chinese Navy has been gradually increasing the frequency of its military deployments in the Indian Ocean, following its continuous participation in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden since December 2008. As such, India is alarmed by this situation. With China’s strengthening of its military base on Hainan, located at the northern end of the South China Sea, India is concerned about the future advance of Chinese Navy submarines or surface vessels deployment into the Indian Ocean from their base on Hainan, seeing China as “muscling its way into the Indian Ocean which New Delhi has always considered its backyard,” as one retired Indian military high official has put it.³⁵ In 2013, when a Chinese Navy submarine entered a Sri Lankan port as part of an anti-piracy operation in the Indian Ocean, several Indian military officials reportedly expressed concern.³⁶ China has been increasing its activities in the Indian Ocean, such as embarking on a large-scale development of Gwadar Port in Pakistan for the “China-Pakistan Economic Corridor” (CPEC) project, as detailed in the next chapter. With its economic development, the Indian Ocean is of great strategic value to China, as it is to Japan and other countries, as a major logistics artery.

In response to these Chinese military activities in the Indian Ocean, the Indian military has been strengthening its sea control and force projection, as mentioned earlier, and promoting military cooperation with others, like the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. Since the twenty-first century, Japan has participated in the Malabar Exercise, which began as a bilateral joint exercise between India and the United States in 1992. ASEAN countries have been invited to participate as well. Vietnam, which has a territorial dispute with China in the South China Sea, has also introduced *Kilo*-class submarines from Russia since 2014, for which India has provided education and training to submarine crews free of charge. We can see India’s intention to expand its presence in ASEAN countries and in the South China Sea to hedge against China advancing past the Strait of Malacca.³⁷ Recently, in 2022, India signed a contract with the Philippines for the export of Indian-made Brahmos cruise missiles.³⁸ Also, in July 2023 it provided the Vietnamese Navy with a small missile corvette.³⁹

In addition, since much of the resources have been devoted to the construction of the surface fleet, mainly aircraft carriers, the conventional-powered submarines deployed at the end of the twentieth century are aging. However, the *Kalvari*-class submarines have been deployed since 2017 to replace those aging submarines, suggesting that India is reinvesting to a certain degree in area denial.⁴⁰ It needs to be pointed out, however, that China does not have the capability to deploy a large-scale maritime force west of the Strait of Malacca at any given time, nor does it have the base capabilities of a friendly nation to serve as a base in the Indian Ocean, so

it does not pose a serious threat. Therefore, investment in area denial for India will remain secondary compared to sea control.

In conclusion, India has maintained its strategic military objective of excluding the influence of outside powers, such as the United States during the Cold War and China in the twenty-first century, and emphasized area denial against the United States, with which it has an overwhelming military disparity.⁴¹ In the contemporary era, India has been incrementally enhancing its autonomous sea control while concurrently bolstering specific capabilities for area denial directed against China’s burgeoning presence in the Indian Ocean. This has been achieved through the development of India’s submarine fleet and bolstered military collaboration with the ASEAN nations within the South China Sea, a region falling within the ambit of Chinese influence.

Based on the analysis in this chapter, my assessment of India’s maritime strategy is shown in Table 10.3.

Table 10.3 Assessment of India’s maritime strategy

	Before the end of the Cold War and economic development (1980–1989)	Economic development and military modernization before and after the end of the Cold War (1990–2009)	Turnaround in relations with the U.S China’s maritime expansion (2010–2023)
Area denial	1	3	3⇒2
Sea control	2	2	3
Power projection	1	1	2

Source Prepared by the author based on data in IISS (2024)
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Notes

1. David Brewster, *India’s Ocean: The Story of India’s Bid for Regional Leadership*, Routledge, 2013, p. 21.
2. Nagao, *Kenshō Indo Gunji Senryaku*, pp. 47–77.
3. The assault landing operations in the Third Indo-Pakistani War were unsuccessful due to lack of preparation according to an internal study. See Indian Integrated Headquarters Ministry of Defence (Navy), *Freedom to Use the Seas: India’s Maritime Military Strategy*, May 2007, pp. 15–19.
4. Nagao, *Kenshō Indo Gunji Senryaku*, pp. 63–64, 70.
5. Robert Kaplan, *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power*, Random House, 2010, p. 7.
6. *Ibid*, p. 125.

7. Ibid, p. 16.
8. Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World, With A New Preface*, W. W. Norton & Company, 2009, p. 153.
9. Conversely, India's commitment to the ASEAN countries or to the South China Sea is likely to cause alarm among Chinese political leaders.
10. Nagao, *Kenshō Indo Gunji Senryaku*, p. 84.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid, pp. 124–125.
13. Ibid, pp. 125–126.
14. Brewster, *India's Ocean*, p. 34.
15. Nagao, *Kenshō Indo Gunji Senryaku*, p. 133.
16. However, as shown in Fig. 10.1, among surface combatant vessels, the number of large surface combatant vessels with a full load displacement of over 3,000 tons has consistently increased.
17. Nagao, *Kenshō Indo Gunji Senryaku*, p. 135.
18. Ibid, p. 229.
19. Brewster, *India's Ocean*, p. 22.
20. Nagao, *Kenshō Indo Gunji Senryaku*, pp. 69–70.
21. Brewster, *India's Ocean*, p. 13.
22. Indian Integrated Headquarters Ministry of Defence (Navy), *Freedom to Use the Seas*, pp. 117–119.
23. Brewster, *India's Ocean*, p. 36.
24. David Scott, "India's 'Grand Strategy' for the Indian Ocean: Mahanian Visions," *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2006, p. 98.
25. Brewster, *India's Ocean*, p. 36.
26. Pape, Alex. *Jane's Fighting Ships Yearbook, 2021 - 2022 Edition*. Jane's Group (May 5, 2021).
27. Prime Minister Modi explains that SAGAR stands for "Security and Growth for All in the Region" and is also the Hindu word for ocean. See Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, "Prime Minister's Keynote Address at Shangri La Dialogue," June 01 2018, <https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/29943/Prime+Ministers+Keynote+Address+at+Shangri+La+Dialogue+June+01+2018>, accessed on September 29, 2023.
28. Nagao, *Kenshō Indo Gunji Senryaku*, p. 200.
29. Ibid, p. 302.
30. Ibid, p. 303.
31. Ashley Tellis, *Dogfight! India's Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft Decision*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011, p. 121.
32. Brewster, *India's Ocean*, p. 186.
33. Ibid, pp. 186–191. From the perspective of India's neighbors, a case could be made for finding it reasonable to tolerate Chinese expansion in order to offset the influence of India, which has often intervened politically and militarily as a regional power.
34. Ibid, p. 184.
35. James Holmes, Andrew Winner, and Toshi Yoshihara, *Indian Naval Strategy in the Twenty-first Century*, Routledge, 2009, p. 127.
36. *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, "China's submarines in Indian Ocean worry Indian Navy," April 07, 2013, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/newdelhi/china-s-submarines-in-indian-ocean-worry-indian-navy/article1-1038689.aspx>, accessed on May 02, 2017. Reuters, "Chinese submarine docks in Sri Lanka despite Indian concerns," November 02, 2014, <http://in.reuters.com/article/sri-lanka-china-submarine-idINKBN0IM0LU20141102>, accessed on May 02, 2017.
37. Nagao, *Kenshō Indo Gunji Senryaku*, p. 298.
38. "Philippines signs deal for BrahMos supersonic anti-ship missile," *Defense News*, January 29, 2022, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/asia-pacific/2022/01/28/philippines-signs-deal-for-brahmos-supersonic-anti-ship-missile/>, accessed on September 29, 2023.

39. “Handing Over of INS Kirpan to VPN;” Ministry of Defense India, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1941807>, accessed on September 29, 2023.
40. This is an export version of the Scorpene class submarine, jointly developed by France and Italy. See Alex Pape, ed., *Jane’s Fighting Ships 2021–2022*, p. 323.
41. Brewster, *India’s Ocean*, p. 204.

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Chapter 11

The Maritime Strategy of China: From Area Denial to Sea Control and Power Projection



Contents

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Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 the area of operations of the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has been limited to “coastal defense.” Its main aim has been to counter amphibious operations by the United States and Taiwan with a counteroffensive against the Chinese mainland in mind, and it has witnessed a series of land warfare.¹ This is apparent in the force structure of the Chinese Navy during its pre-modernization phase at the end of the 1990s. It was not until 1994 that the Chinese Navy commissioned its first modern surface vessels and submarines, unlike the older vessels based on the Soviet Union’s basic designs of the 1950s, but rather based on post-Cold War Western or Russian technology. In 1994, there were only 18 large surface combatants with a full load capacity of over 3000 tons, and up to 17 of these were obsolete *Luda*-class destroyers, and the mainstay of the Chinese Navy’s surface warship force was over 150 small missile boats or over 300 small guard boats.² From the end of the 1950s, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) had been unable to obtain military technology from the Soviet Union due to the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations and, by the end of the Cold War, the PLA possessed nuclear forces while its conventional forces consisted of typically obsolete forces. After the end of the Cold War, the PLA tried to modernize by importing modern anti-aircraft missiles and naval combat systems from France and other countries and gas turbine propulsion systems for surface vessels from Ukraine. However, these transfers of military technology from Europe were interrupted by

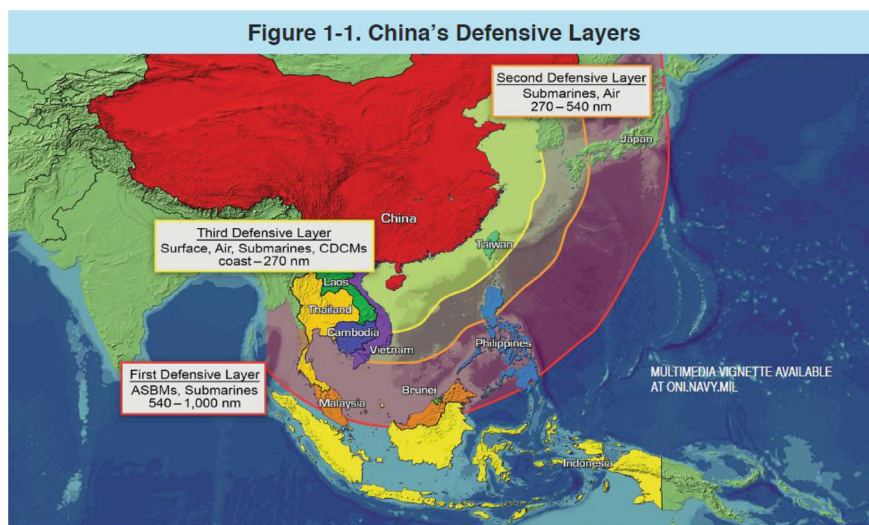


Fig. 11.1 Expansion of China's military power in the maritime domain. *Source* U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence, *The PLA Navy: New Capabilities and Missions for the 21st Century*, p. 8

the arms embargo following the Tiananmen Square incident of 1988, and full-scale modernization was not begun until after the mid-1990s as China had to wait for economic development and the transfer of equipment and technology from Russia.

Since the wake of the 1991 Gulf War or the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis, the PLA has focused on developing an area denial strategy known as anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) to impede and deny U.S. military operations access to the airspace surrounding China, a strategy that has been accompanied by rapid modernization as the defense budget has grown with China's rapid economic development. As a result, the PLA's area denial has greatly exceeded the so-called "first island chain" from the Japanese archipelago to Taiwan and the Philippines, and it appears to have reached a level at which it can impede the superiority of U.S. forces in a wide area of the Western Pacific. According to an analysis by the U.S. Navy's Office of Naval Intelligence, the PLA's military power in the maritime domain is multi-layered as shown in Fig. 11.1 and, as of 2015, its influence is said to extend to waters about 1000 nautical miles (about 1850 km) from the coast of mainland China.

As shown in Fig. 1.5 and elsewhere, the threat range of land-based ballistic and cruise missiles and long-range strike aircraft is well over 1000 km from the Chinese mainland. In addition, if its modernized submarines cross the "first island chain" into the Western Pacific, the PLA would be able to carry out area denial operations over an even wider area. As many of the references cited so far in this book explain China's military development in the context of its A2/AD strategy, the PLA's military development is generally described in the context of its area denial to resist U.S. forces. At the time of this writing, the most serious problem for China in the maritime

domain seems to be how to eliminate U.S. military superiority and secure its own freedom of action.

On the other hand, the PLA's military development in the maritime domain cannot be understood only in the context of its area denial: since the mid-1990s, it has been rapidly modernizing its area denial assets, such as conventional submarines. And especially in the South China Sea since around 2010, Beijing has occupied many islands and built artificial ones in an attempt to bring the entire sea area within its own sphere of influence through state implementation of such measures. In parallel with this, the number of typical area denial assets, such as diesel submarines and small missile boats in the PLAN, is clearly decreasing, while the navy is building new sea control assets such as missile destroyers and other large surface combatants in addition to aircraft carriers. Since 2007, China has initiated the construction of substantial new amphibious vessels outfitted with air cushion landing craft. This development signifies an enhancement of China's power projection capabilities, strategically aimed at exerting dominance over the Western Pacific. Additionally, this naval expansion is designed to facilitate amphibious assault operations should a crisis involving the Taiwan conflict occur. In the context of this background, this chapter analyzes the development of modernization and area denial in the mid-1990s, followed by changes in sea control and power projection around 2010.

11.1 The Beginning of Modernization and Offshore Defense (1980–1992)

The modernization of the PLA is generally considered to have begun in the late 1970s. According to a RAND report, after 1976, the PLA's operational doctrine shifted from relying on the geographic depth of mainland China and massed infantry tactics to rapidly deploying forces and preempting external aggression in the early stages of conflict.³ Similarly, China's national military strategy at this time was oriented toward a shift from continuous defense towards defense of peripheral areas and power projection, and the PLA was reformed accordingly from its traditional low-technology posture relying on guerrilla or manpower tactics to a modern force emphasizing mobility, rapid deployment capabilities, and precision strikes.⁴

However, the main threat envisioned at the end of the 1970s was a limited Soviet land invasion of the political and industrial base in the northern part of the Chinese continent, which did not indicate a major change from the conventional strategy of weakening the Soviet Union by luring it into geographical depths.⁵ So, at this time, the Soviet Union, which bordered China, was regarded as the main threat and the modernization of the Chinese Navy was not considered a high-priority issue at the end of the Cold War. Moreover, China did not have the economic strength to undertake large-scale military reforms at that time. As such, the area of operations continued to be limited to coastal areas, with only limited operational capability.

Nevertheless, the Chinese Navy began to gradually modernize in tandem with its economic open-door policy in the 1980s, and the direction chosen was the “off-shore defense” proposed by the PLAN’s Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Liu Huaqing in 1987. The main strategic objectives were territorial sovereignty, maritime law enforcement, and the protection of maritime resources in the Yellow Sea, East China Sea, and South China Sea; the so-called “first island chain,” while moving away from conventional coastal defenses.⁶

By the late 1980s, however, Chinese society had not yet escaped the stagnation caused by the Cultural Revolution of 1966–1976. Although economic growth had gradually begun in the early years of reform and opening up under Deng Xiaoping, the modernization of the military was still limited. The PLA Air Force was “actually stuck in the 1970s and 1980s with an outdated force structure that was largely the product of Soviet designs from the 1950s and their domestic copying in China.”⁷ The PLA as a whole had to wait until the end of the 1990s to break away from its dependence on Soviet equipment of the 1950s and to operate modern assets. As of the beginning of 1994, the PLAN possessed only five old attack submarines (*Han*-class), the *Romeo*-class submarines, which were basically designed by the Soviet Union in the 1950s, and the *Ming*-class submarines, which were domestically produced in China based on the *Romeo*-class submarines.

As for conventional submarines with modern combat capability, the first *Kilo*-class submarine was introduced from Russia at the end of 1994. As for large surface combatants, the first *Luhu*-class destroyer, equipped with a French-made search radar and short-range anti-air missiles, was commissioned in the same year, and the second destroyer was undergoing public trials. But, other than that, most of the weapons were Soviet-made from the 1950s.⁸

11.2 Development of China’s Area Denial Capability Against the United States (1993–2009)

The modernization of the PLA, which began in the 1990s, is mainly based on area denial, as we have discussed. The capabilities demonstrated by the U.S. military in the Gulf War were not merely in terms of destructive power but were characterized by accurate intelligence and precision strike capability via command-and-control communications networks. Utilizing a repository of data gathered during peacetime by satellites and high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft, early warning aircraft and additional surveillance resources allocated to the conflict zone have been able to identify targets, such as enemy command centers and radar installations, with precision. Subsequently, the information regarding these targets is relayed in a matter of seconds to allied offensive units via tactical data links, thereby enabling the precise and efficient neutralization of these targets. Internal PLA analysis pointed out the PLA’s vulnerability to such long-range precision strike capabilities in particular, and

in 1993 President Jiang Zemin responded to this situation by instructing that efforts focus on “preparing for local wars under high-technology conditions.”⁹

However, a direct confrontation (force on force battle) against U.S. power projection was like “throwing an egg against a rock,” and had to be avoided.¹⁰ For this reason, the PLA-oriented military strategy took an asymmetrical form in terms of force composition against the superior U.S. forces. Specifically, the PLA's strategic objective was to impede and deny U.S. military action by means of asymmetric and relatively inexpensive forces such as long-range attack aircraft, cruise missiles, and submarines. According to the RAND study, in order to avoid a head-on collision with the U.S. military's power projection, especially its long-range precision strike capability, the People's Republic of China was planning a preemptive surprise attack, with particular emphasis on a pinpoint concentrated attack on the enemy's command, control and communications system or logistical center of gravity.¹¹

The Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), a U.S. think tank, has drawn similar conclusions to the RAND's one about the PLA's area denial strategy and its direction. According to the CSBA analysis on the PLA's A2/AD strategy and its implication for the possible risks that the United States will face, “the strong A2/AD capabilities that the PLA is focusing on are rapidly making U.S. power projection risky and, in some cases, threatening to exact a prohibitive price. As a result, the United States faces a strategic choice between accepting a negative power shift in the military balance or exploring options to compensate for it.”¹² The PLA's strategy of area denial is expected to be implemented in the following ways.¹³

- (1) First, the PLA may be planning to conduct a large-scale preemptive strike designed to inflict severe damage on Japanese and U.S. forces based or operated forward; keep other U.S. air and naval forces well out of range or unable to penetrate into the homeland; disrupt U.S. command and control networks; and heavily constrain U.S. operational logistics by destroying major supply nodes.
- (2) The overall strategy may be to inflict substantial losses on U.S. forces, lengthen U.S. operational timelines and highlight the United States' inability to defend its allies.
- (3) Once this is accomplished, the PLA could assume the strategic defense posture and deny reinforcing U.S. forces access to the theater until the United States determines that it would be too costly to undo what would in effect be a *fait accompli*.

In other words, the CSBA analysis envisions a scenario essentially similar to that of the RAND's in terms of a “high-intensity conventional war in the Western Pacific theater” triggered by a large-scale PLA first strike. The aforementioned Office of Naval Intelligence similarly concludes that the PLA is modernizing to strengthen itself against any vulnerabilities to maritime threats, especially long-range precision strike, and that its orientation is to “win local warfare in a high-tech environment,” with a particular emphasis on the following two points¹⁴:

- (1) Informationization: Effort to incorporate modern information technology into all aspects of military operations

(2) Non-Contact Warfare: Employing platforms and weapons in long-range, precision strikes from outside an enemy's "defended zone."

As a result, anti-surface warfare and anti-air warfare capabilities have improved markedly, and the quantity of contemporary submarines outfitted with anti-ship cruise missiles has risen substantially. Although improvements in anti-submarine warfare capabilities appear to be lagging behind, equipment such as towed/depth-variable sonars are gradually spreading among surface vessels, and the deployment of Y-9 anti-submarine patrol aircraft appears to be progressing.¹⁵ Thus, in order to establish superiority in "local area warfare," the Chinese Navy has prioritized the development of submarine forces that excel in stealth and small missile boats that are highly maneuverable. Similarly, since the late 1990s, the PLA Air Force has also focused on modernizing its air defense capability to prevent the projection of U.S. forces. A summary of these efforts is shown in Table 11.1.

The "Integrated Air Defense System (IADS)" in Table 11.1 mainly consists of the following three features.¹⁶

Table 11.1 Changes in the PLA's "integrated air defense system"

Type		1996	2003	2010	2015	2017
AWACS						
KJ-2000		—	—	4	4	4
KJ-200		—	—	4	4 +	4–8
<i>Air defense fighter</i>	Generation					
J-5 (MIG 17)	2nd generation machine	400	—	—	—	—
J-6 (MIG 19)	2nd generation machine	3300	550	—	—	—
J-7 (MIG21)	3rd Generation	570	700	588	528	450
J-8 (Finback)	3rd generation	130	232	360	168	100
J-10	4th generation	—	—	150	294	350
Sukhoi 27/J-11	4th generation	24	100	136	340	400
Sukhoi 30/MKK/J-16	4th generation	—	58	97	97	121
J-15	4th generation	—	—	—	5	30
<i>Surface-to-air missile</i>	Range (km)					
HQ-2 (SA-2)	35	500+	500+	300+	300+	200+
S-300 PMU (SA-10C)	100	32	32	32	32	32
S-300 PMU-1 (SA-20A)	150	—	32	64	64	64
S-300 PMU-2 (SA-20B)	200	—	—	64	64	64
HQ -12 (KSA-1)	50	—	—	24	24	48
HQ-9	200	—	—	32	32	64
S-400 (SA-21)	400	—	—	—	—	16

Source Eric Heginbotham, et al., *The U.S.-China Military Scorecard: Forces, Geography, and the Evolving Balance of Power 1996–2017*, RAND Corporation, 2015, p. 101

- (1) Early warning: develop patrol/early warning aircraft such as the A-50 and Y-8 airborne early warning (AEW).
- (2) Long-range surface-to-air missiles: purchase the S-300 series from Russia and develop domestically produced systems such as the HQ-9 and HQ-12. (In 2014, an agreement was reached with Russia for the introduction of the latest model, the S-400.)
- (3) Air interceptors: older aircraft such as the J-5 (Soviet model MiG-17) and J-7 (Soviet model MiG-19) will be renewed, and fourth-generation aircraft such as the Su-27/30 (Su-27/30) will be introduced from Russia, and avionics, etc., obtained from Russia will be back-fitted to domestic third-generation aircraft such as the J-10/J-11. In addition, it will increase production of domestically produced 4th generation fighters such as the J-10/J-11 and, from 2011 onward, the J-20.

Figure 11.2 also illustrates the PLA's air defense assets, which include the defensive counter-air action area and the range of the surface-to-air missile systems.

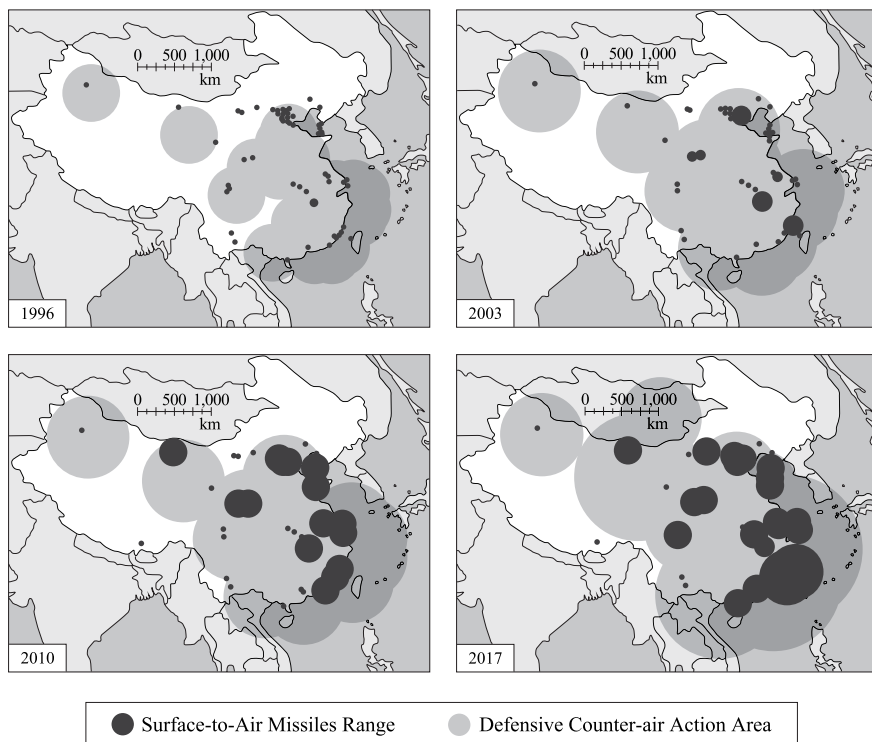


Fig. 11.2 Transition of PLA air defense capability with respect to coverage area. *Source* Eric Heginbotham, et al., *The U.S.-China Military Scorecard: Forces, Geography, and the Evolving Balance of Power 1996–2017*, RAND Corporation, 2015, p. 109

With the end of the Cold War, confrontational ties with Russia were repaired, and the border issue over Ussuri Island was resolved through negotiations in 2004 by dividing the area equally, yet the issue over the demarcation of the border with India has not been resolved as of this writing, and the conflict and confrontation in the ground area have not been ended. However, from Fig. 11.2, it can be understood that most of the air defense assets are intended to be deployed in coastal areas to expand the area denial, and that they place their focus more on coastal areas compared to inland ground areas, such as the Sino-Indian border. Thus, the modernization of PLA conventional forces can be seen as not only for naval forces, but also for air defense assets, many of whose resources are intended to contribute to area denial in the maritime domain.

In the contemporary era, specifically within the confines of the twenty-first century, the PLA has broadened its maritime sphere of influence beyond mere coastal territories. It is imperative to acquire real-time surveillance of maritime and aerial assets and to disseminate this reconnaissance information amongst various naval and aerial platforms. This strategic information sharing is crucial to ensure that operational maneuvers within domains that are typically inaccessible are conducted with heightened efficacy. To this end, the PLA has been improving its capabilities in search sensors such as satellites and over the horizon (OTH) radar. The AN/FPS-118 Sky Wave OTH radar operated by the U.S. military in the Atlantic coastal zone during the Cold War had a coverage area of approximately 925 to 3330 km.¹⁷ The combined surveillance capability of OTH, reconnaissance satellites, and other sensors covers 875,000 square miles around mainland China and is assessed to have the ability to identify maritime and air targets in near real-time.¹⁸

Thus, the PLA's area denial strategy has been dramatically modernized in the 20 or so years from the end of the 1990s to the present. The PLA's area of influence is not limited to China's coastal areas such as the Yellow Sea and the Bohai Sea, but also covers most of the waters of the East China Sea and the South China Sea and is believed to extend to parts of the Western Pacific as well.

11.3 Expansion of Sea Control and Power Projection Capabilities in the South China Sea (2010–2023)

So far, we have analyzed the development of the PLA's military capabilities in the maritime domain from the perspective of area denial. The 2015 Chinese defense white paper, *China's Military Strategy*, stated that "the PLA Navy (PLAN) will gradually shift its focus from 'offshore waters defense' to the combination of 'offshore waters defense' with 'open seas protection,' ...and build a combined, multi-functional and efficient marine combat force structure. The PLAN will enhance its capabilities for strategic deterrence and counterattack, maritime maneuvers, joint operations at sea, comprehensive defense and comprehensive support."¹⁹ This statement revealed

China's intention to expand its open-sea deployment capabilities and its focus on enhancing its power projection capabilities, such as assault landing ships.

This raises the question of why the PLA is investing so heavily in building a fleet centered on large surface vessels to acquire such maritime control and power projection capabilities in the open sea. Compared to submarines and surface air power, which are highly covert, surface vessels are inherently more vulnerable and expensive. That is why the PLA has traditionally prioritized the construction of missile and submarine forces based on its A2/AD strategy, rather than costly carrier strike groups. Moreover, in terms of maritime and air operations capabilities in a Taiwan contingency, it is assumed that saturation attacks will be conducted from land-based air/missile bases facing the Taiwan Strait, and there is little reason to deploy large, high-cost surface ship units. In the event of a Taiwan contingency, the main role that surface forces could play would be limited to escorting landing forces were there to be a final amphibious assault landing operation.

To understand this intention, it is necessary to look at China's security policy from a larger perspective. China's growing economy is highly dependent on maritime trade via sea lines of communications using the Strait of Malacca as a choke point. For China, the preservation of maritime transportation routes through the Strait of Malacca to the Indian Ocean and the oil-producing countries of the Middle East is of vital importance. Therefore, the South China Sea, which is the approach to the Strait of Malacca from mainland China, is "arguably 'China's Caribbean,' [and] bears partial resemblance to the real Caribbean Sea (for the U.S.)."²⁰ In addition, the U.S. Navy has deployed littoral combat ships to Singapore and Australia is vigorously modernizing its military power as a U.S. ally in the southern South China Sea.²¹ Beyond the Strait of Malacca, India, with which China has been at loggerheads over the ownership of Kashmir, is strengthening its military power. Thus, outside of China's area denial capabilities, the military power of the United States and its allies and friends continues to prevail. Despite China's dependence on the ocean for much of its logistics, as the source of its prosperity, it is unable to control the seas, especially the waters surrounding the choke point of the Strait of Malacca. This situation is often referred to as the "Malacca Dilemma."

To overcome this dilemma, China is taking several measures. First, it is making large-scale infrastructure investments in neighboring countries, and it is allocating a significant amount of the national budget to energy resource procurement and logistics routes that combine maritime and land transportation routes. For examples, through Chinese investment, Myanmar's Kyaukphyu Port has been developed as a deep-water port that can be used by large, deep-draft vessels, and a road and gas/oil pipeline are being developed to connect Ruili in Yunnan Province, China, via the capital Nebidaw, known as the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC).²²

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project connects the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region with the Pakistani port of Gwadar, among others. These economic corridors provide energy supply and logistics routes that bypass the Strait of Malacca. The strategic value of Gwadar in particular is seen as high, and some analysts believe that China is planning to deploy a permanent naval force in Gwadar and other coastal areas of Pakistan.²³ Such infrastructure investment is

generally viewed as part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), but from the perspective of maritime strategy, the BRI is a more comprehensive approach.²⁴ In other words, from a maritime strategy perspective, the development of economic corridors such as CMEC and CPEC is a means of hedging against the risk of the “Malacca Dilemma.” Likewise, the PLA’s efforts to mitigate the strategic vulnerability known as the dilemma through the management of sea lines of communication, may be interpreted as a deliberate strategy to solidify sea control and enhance its capacity for power projection.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Chinese Navy has accumulated experience in open-sea deployment through things like goodwill visits abroad by naval units. Since the end of 2008, it has continued to deploy naval units for anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. In addition, it has participated in a number of multinational exercises such as the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise hosted by the U.S. (though excluded since 2018) and is steadily improving its long-term open-sea deployment capability by continuously conducting exercises throughout the Western Pacific, including the waters surrounding Japan. Further, the Chinese Navy has been increasing the capabilities of its aircraft carrier (Liaoning), purchased from Russia, and domestically produced aircraft carrier (Shandong), as well as commissioning a number of missile destroyers equipped with multifunctional radars, known as “Chinese Aegis,” to rapidly transform into a “blue-water-navy” capable of performing a variety of missions in the open sea. In addition to these aircraft carriers and their escort vessels, China has been amplifying and contemporizing its fleet of amphibious assault vessels. Anticipations are directed towards an augmentation of its capacity to deploy ground forces rapidly in scenarios such as a potential crisis involving Taiwan, or in the event of conflict within the South China Sea region. This progression is likely to result in a more robust ability for power projection in the foreseeable future.

This allocation of resources to sea control or power projection by the PLAN is evident from the pace of the commissioning of major naval vessels since the start of modernization. The renewal of conventional submarines, which began with the introduction of the *Kilo*-class from Russia, proceeded rapidly in parallel with the domestic production of the *Song*- and *Yuan*-classes, but the pace of commissioning has slowed since around 2014.²⁵ In addition, missile boats, which were possessed in large numbers before modernization, are typical area denial assets. However, after 60 *Houbei*-class fast missile boats were put into service between 2004 and 2009 to replace them, no additional construction has been confirmed.²⁶

After the rapid renewal and modernization of area denial assets by 2010, the number of modern missile destroyers such as the *Luyang* II/III-class and *Renhai*-class, equipped with multifunctional radar, has been rapidly increasing since around 2013. In addition, a large number of *Jiangkai* I/II-class frigates with a full load capacity of over 3000 tons are being built, clearly indicating that the PLAN is focusing its efforts on long-term maritime deployment capability, or sea control, by large surface combatants. Furthermore, since 2007, the Chinese Navy has built the first large landing ship (*Yuzhao*-class) equipped with air cushion landing craft, and in April 2021, a Type 075 assault landing ship (*Hainan*), which is thought to have

capabilities comparable to the large assault landing ships of the U.S. Navy, will be commissioned.²⁷

There is no clear indication of the PLA's intention regarding this trend, for instance, as to whether it has shifted its policy to emphasize sea control because it is satisfied that its current area denial is sufficient to prevent the United States from getting close. For example, with regard to large surface combatant vessels, which form the basis of sea control capability, it is believed that all of the old *Ruda* destroyers, which were the mainstay of the 1990s, have already been decommissioned. However, the modernization and renewal of diesel-powered submarines, which are crucial for area denial, has not been completed, and there are still 15 *Ming*-class submarines in service as of 2020, which are copies of the former Soviet Union's *Romeo*-class submarines and cannot be used in modern warfare.²⁸

In other words, it is thought that the Chinese Navy is modifying its strategic direction, which has been biased toward area denial since around 2010, and intends to exercise sea control in the South China Sea and other waters that it has brought into its sphere of influence, as well as to improve its capability for power projection. While this analysis is contextualized within the temporal framework of the year 2023—the time of this study's composition—the preeminent strategic objective of China's military within its maritime sphere appears to be the countering of United States maritime influence. Concurrently, given China's dependency on sea lanes for the majority of its economic transactions and resource imports, there is an inevitable impetus to concurrently engage in the enhancement of sea control capabilities while pursuing the strategy of area denial. The strategic environment is unlikely to change significantly in the future.

11.4 Intentions for Improving Sea Control and Power Projection Capabilities and Evaluation of Current Status

We have discussed the PLA's modernization and expansion of capabilities. It is estimated that the PLA's area denial capability is reaching a level at which it can realistically deny U.S. military operational maneuverability from the Chinese coast to the Philippine Sea and other parts of the Western Pacific, thereby gaining localized superiority. On the other hand, when comparing overall capabilities, there is still a large gap between U.S. forces and the PLA in terms of both mass and quantity. With regard to sea control, the Chinese Navy's aircraft carriers are not conventional take-off and landing (CTOL) capable of launching from a catapult, but are short take-off but arrested recovery (STOBAR) carriers with a ski jump system, which limits the amount of ammunition and fuel carried by attack aircraft and their operations. Thus, they cannot operate shipborne early warning aircraft. Therefore, the Chinese Navy is not at a level to compete head-on with the U.S. Navy's carrier strike group in the open sea, where it cannot obtain the support of ground-based air power. However,

the third aircraft carrier, the *Fujian*, launched in June 2022, is reportedly scheduled to be equipped with electromagnetic catapults, and if it reaches the operational level, China’s carrier strike group may have a sea control and power projection capability that could rival that of the United States.

As for power projection, although the capability of land-based ballistic/cruise missiles is rapidly improving, the country does not have a Russian supersonic bomber like the Backfire, or large strategic bomber like the Tu-95 Bear, both of which can conduct large-scale transoceanic bombardment. Therefore, at the present time, its capability to project forces outside the range of ground-launched missile systems (i.e., in the Indian Ocean) is limited.

Thus, although the PLAN is rapidly improving its long-term deployment capability in the open sea, it still lacks the capability, in terms of both mass and quantity, to conduct a high-intensity conventional war with U.S. forces in the open sea away from the Chinese mainland. Table 11.2 shows the RAND assessment of the military superiority relationship between China and the United States.

Table 11.2 Assessment of the military superiority relationship between the United States and China

Scorecard	Taiwan incident				During the outbreak of conflict in the Spratly Islands			
	1996	2003	2010	2017	1996	2003	2010	2017
1. Air base strike capability by China								
2. Air superiority between the U.S. and China								
3. Air breakthrough capability of the U.S								
4. Airbase strike capability by the U.S								
5.China’s Anti-Surface Warfare Capabilities								
6. U.S. anti-surface warfare capabilities								
7. U.S. anti-space warfare capabilities								
8. China’s anti-space warfare capabilities								
9. Cyber warfare between the U.S. and China								
Meaning of scorecard								
United States	China							
Huge advantage	Great disadvantage							
Predominance	Disadvantage							
Par	Par							
Disadvantage	Predominance							
Great disadvantage	Huge advantage							

Source Eric Heginbotham, et al., *The U.S.-China Military Scorecard: Forces, Geography, and the Evolving Balance of Power 1996–2017*, RAND Corporation, 2015, p. 318

Table 11.3 Assessment of China's maritime strategy

	Before the start of military modernization (1980–1992)	Development of A2/AD Strategy (1993–2009)	Establishment of local superiority in the ocean (2010–2023)
Area denial	2	3	3⇒4
Sea control	1	2	3
Power projection	1	1	3

Source Prepared by the author

In line with this assessment, Chinese naval forces could exert significant political influence in low-intensity conflicts with neighboring countries in the near future, but even if the Chinese Navy takes operational actions against Japan and the United States, they will only play a part in air defense operations within the air cover of ground-based air power. According to Table 11.2, as of 2017, the PLA is estimated to have an advantage in attacking air bases in the vicinity of a Taiwan contingency or in attacking U.S.-Taiwan ground forces, but the U.S. military continues to hold a broad advantage in other areas of operation. In the case of the Taiwan contingency, however, it can be seen that the United States and China roughly have parity in terms of air superiority in the vicinity of China's coastal areas, and the relative advantage of the United States is estimated to be waning in the South China Sea conflict over the Spratly Islands. The same is true for the U.S. military's penetration. On the other hand, the U.S. military's anti-ship attack capability is estimated to maintain its superiority. In addition, although not listed in Table 11.2, the PLAN's anti-submarine warfare capability is considered to be at a rudimentary stage compared to other areas, and the advantage in the underwater domain continues to be with the U.S. side.²⁹

As described above, the PLA's area denial strategy has given it a partial advantage over U.S. forces in its own coastal areas. On the other hand, it has rapidly improved its sea control capabilities and is building a certain degree of self-contained operational capability, but it is not yet at a level to compete with U.S. forces in the open seas. In terms of power projection, while its air strike capability is limited, it is believed to be expanding its capability in terms of projecting ground forces with an eye to issues such as territorial sovereignty.

Table 11.3 shows the author's assessment of China based on the previous analysis.

Notes

1. U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence, *The PLA Navy: New Capabilities and Missions for the 21st Century*, 2015, p. 7.
2. The *Luda*-class destroyer is a copy of the Soviet *Kotlin*-class destroyer of the 1950s, a obsolete ship equipped primarily with guns and torpedoes. Although it has undergone some modernization and refit, including the addition of a French-made short-range anti-aircraft missile system,

it does not have the C4I system required for modern warfare. See Richard Sharpe, ed., *Jane's Fighting Ships, 1994–1995*, pp. 113–135.

3. Cliff, et al., *Entering the Dragon's Lair*, p. 18.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid, p. 19.
6. As early as the mid-1980s, the Chinese Navy assumed that its future area of operations would extend to the second island chain, including Guam and Saipan, as its capabilities expanded.
7. Michael Chase and Cristina Garafola, "China's Search for a 'Strategic Air Force,'" *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (2016), p. 7.
8. Sharpe, ed., *Jane's Fighting Ships 1994–1995*, pp. 114–116.
9. Cliff, et al., *Entering the Dragon's Lair*, pp. 21, 25.
10. Ibid, pp. 28–29.
11. Ibid, pp. 28–38.
12. Jan Van Tol, Mark Gunzinger, Andrew Krepinevich, and Jim Thomas, *AirSea Battle: A Point-of-Departure Operational Concept*, CSBA, May 2010, p. ix.
13. Ibid, pp. 20–21.
14. U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence, *The PLA Navy*, p. 6.
15. Ibid, pp. 13, 19.
16. Eric Heginbotham, et al., *The U.S.-China Military Scorecard: Forces, Geography, and the Evolving Balance of Power 1996–2017*, RAND Corporation, 2015, pp. 98–100. However, questions have been raised as to whether these interceptor fighters are stealthy and whether they meet performance requirements, such as the development of high-power engines.
17. Ibid, pp. 157–158.
18. U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence, *The PLA Navy*, pp. 21–22. However, OTH radar has limitations in its azimuth and distance resolution, and it should not be expected to be accurate enough to detect and track specific targets in real time by itself.
19. The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, *White Papers: China's Military Strategy*, May 15, 2015, Chapter IV "Building and Development of China's Armed Forces."
20. Holmes and Yoshihara, *Chinese Naval Strategy in the 21st Century*, p. 52.
21. Australia's defense budget will increase from A\$42.2 billion in FY 2020–21 to A\$73.7 billion in FY 2029–30, reaching a total of A\$575 billion over this 10-year period. Australian Department of Defence, *2020 Defence Strategic Update*, 2020, p. 7.
22. Aramaki Hideki, "Chūgoku no 'Ittai Ichiro' to Nihontō Kokusai Kikan Shien ga Kōsa Suru Myanmaa no Daikibo Purojekuto (A Large-scale Project in Myanmar at the Intersection of China's 'One Belt, One Road' and Support from Japan and Other International Organizations)," *Kokkenkyō Jōhō* (Infrastructure Development Institute Information), No. 871, March 2019.
23. Daniel Markey, "How the United States Should Deal with China in Pakistan," Carnegie Endowment website, April 08, 2020. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/04/08/how-united-states-should-deal-with-china-in-pakistan-pub-81456>, accessed on December 14, 2021.
24. Ibid. CPEC is reportedly positioned as a "pilot project" of the One Belt, One Road Initiative.
25. However, this may also be due to the fact that the Lada class submarines, which were to be introduced from Russia, have been delayed significantly from entering service in Russia due to technical problems. Alex Pape, ed., *Jane's Fighting Ships 2020–2021*, Jane's Group UK, 2020, p. 639.
26. Stephen Saunders, ed., *Jane's Fighting Ships 2014–2015*, IHS, p. 154.
27. The *Yuzhao*-class, with a full load capacity of 18,500 tons, has been in service for four ships since 2007 until 2016, and has dramatically improved its transport capacity compared to the previous mainstay landing ship, the *Yuting*-class (full load capacity of about 4,900 tons). See IISS, *The Military Balance 2017*, February 2017, p. 282. Although the Hainan has a hull comparable to that of the U.S. Navy's assault landing ships, the PLA does not possess short takeoff/vertical landing aircraft (STOVL aircraft), which limits its ability to conduct amphibious assault operations. See Osborn, "These Type 075 Ships Would Be Front and Center in a Chinese Amphibious Assault on Taiwan," *The National Interest*, December 9,

- 2021, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/these-type-075-ships-would-be-front-and-center-chinese-amphibious-assault-taiwan-197701>, accessed on December 10, 2021.
28. Pape, ed., *Jane's Fighting Ships 2020–2021*, p. 131.
29. Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle*, pp. 124–125.

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Chapter 12

Conclusion: Causal Inferences on Maritime Strategies



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In the conclusion, I first present the main points of the analytical results derived through the case studies in Parts II and III. Next, the six countries analyzed are classified into four patterns, focusing on where they prioritize area denial, sea control, and power projection, and on what factors in their military strategic objectives have changed. In the report under consideration, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia have been treated together, due to the revelation that their military strategic objectives displayed a broad alignment throughout the duration of the analysis. Conversely, Japan, India, and China have experienced significant shifts in their military strategic objectives over the period spanning from 1980 to 2023. Consequently, the analytical framework categorizes each of these three nations into two distinct cases, thereby accounting for a cumulative total of six cases. A total of nine cases are therefore used in this patterning process: one case each for the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia, and two cases each for Japan, India, and China.

In the latter half of this book, these nine cases are used to model a maritime military strategy. This is to present a causal inference model in which the United States is the independent variable among the nine cases and the eight cases, excluding the United States, are the dependent variables. Rather than constructing a single model,

a causal inference model is used to explain the maritime military strategies of the major countries, which is the result of a complex interplay of various factors, by setting “whether or not to accept the military superiority of the United States in the maritime domain” as one of the independent variables. This analytical framework demonstrates that despite the complexity and multiplicity of effectors, a coherent and straightforward causal inference can be discerned with respect to the maritime military strategies adopted by major countries.

One of the most important arguments in this book is that the best analytical framework for understanding contemporary military strategy in the maritime domain is based on *area denial*, *sea control*, and *power projection*. This is an effective method for accurately understanding the military strategies of nations in the maritime domain when compared with conventional considerations. On the other hand, the arguments in this book include a wide range of insights about military power, from various strategic theories to the tactical and technical levels. The validity of the analytical framework of this book was asserted and its analytical structure presented in Part I before the case studies in Parts II and III, and it is not based on a basic conflict structure, dualism, or a simple comparison of troop or asset numbers. The results of the analysis of the six countries obtained through the case studies are diverse, and it is clear that careful and accurate analysis is necessary to understand the military strategy of each country.

As I have repeatedly stated, the debate on whether a particular nation is a “sea power or a land power” cannot completely eliminate the subjectivity of the debater because it is ultimately difficult to organize the concept in a strict manner. In particular, as globalization has progressed even further since the start of the twenty-first century, and the mobility of goods, funds, information, and people has increased on a global scale, most nations have found their national interests in the global economy. For this reason, this book defines sea power as *a state that actively plans to use maritime domains in achieving its military strategic objectives*, and similarly defines land power as *a state that does not actively plan to use maritime domains in achieving its military strategic objectives, and whose primary area of military activity is the terrestrial domain*. These definitions have been developed as an expression of the variable rather than as an explanation of the intrinsic character of a state.

Following this rule, of the six countries discussed in this study, only Russia can be consistently assessed as a *land power* throughout the period under analysis. Nonetheless, it would be remiss to overlook Russia’s distinctive maritime military capacity, which is particularly oriented towards the negation of maritime threats, when considering its military strategy within the naval sphere. This specificity warrants explicit acknowledgment in the context of this discourse. The other five countries have important national interests in the maritime domain, and all six countries under analysis have developed their military strategies in the maritime domain in various ways. Therefore, the author found that the “sea power/land power dualism” viewpoint, in which “sea power conducts power projection against the terrestrial domain and land power opposes it by denying the domain,” which is often seen in works such as

those by Mackinder (Chap. 1), is inadequate for understanding contemporary military strategy in the maritime domain according to the three premises presented in this book.

In light of the above, in order to empirically advance military strategy in the maritime domain, it is necessary to consider in detail the geographical condition, political situation, and historical background of each of these areas along the analytical frameworks of area denial, sea control, and power projection. It is also necessary to provide specific explanations for each of these areas. Therefore, this book is somewhat complicated in terms of the process of deriving the analytical framework, and producing the results of the analysis using the framework.

While this book does not abandon the considerations required in the social sciences of finding regularities through causal inference, modeling, and patterning, it only describes such complexities as they are. At the same time, the purpose of this book is not restricted to providing a factual descriptive account of the military strategies of the six countries analyzed. Rather, in conclusion, I have tried to derive as simple a pattern as possible from the results of our analysis, and then to aggregate the five countries (those excluding the United States) into a single causal inference model that accurately and clearly explains each country's military strategy in the maritime domain during the period under analysis. I also present a tool for making some valid predictions for the near future.

12.1 Individual Assessment of the Six Countries

First, I present an assessment of the six countries analyzed in terms of the prioritization of military strategic objectives or the ability to conduct high-intensity conventional warfare based on the analytical framework of area denial, sea control, and power projection in the maritime domain, as found through the case studies. Throughout the period under analysis, the United States is thought to have maintained military superiority in the maritime domain. However, with the emergence of maritime challengers such as the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War and China after 2010, the United States began to place more emphasis on sea control than power projection. The United Kingdom has consistently sought to maintain and expand its influence while complementing the military superiority of the United States in the maritime domain. Japan has also endeavored to augment the U.S. ' sea control, while simultaneously focusing on its own area denial strategies in relation to the Soviet Union (towards the cessation of the Cold War) and against China, subsequent to 2010. In periods devoid of proximate, significant military threats, Japan has prioritized sea control, aspiring to broaden its sphere of influence within regions of national interest, thus leveraging the military preeminence of the United States.

Russia's military strategy in the maritime domain has, in principle, been consistent since the Soviet era at the end of the Cold War. It places the highest priority on strategic nuclear forces, and in particular, it emphasizes the preservation of the maritime area where its nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), which form the

Table 12.1 Evaluation scale (Table 4.2 republished)

5	It excels in high-intensity conventional warfare and has the power to eliminate the military challenge of any other state
4	It is highly capable in high-intensity conventional warfare, and is in a situation where it is competing for military superiority with other major countries
3	It can respond to some degree to high-intensity conventional warfare, but only to the extent that it is geographically limited or complements such capabilities possessed by other allies
2	It is limited in its ability to respond to low-intensity conflicts and is not capable of conducting high-intensity conventional warfare
1	The company has little or no such capacity

Source Prepared by the author

basis of its second-strike capability in nuclear deterrence, operate. In other words, it prioritizes the denial of certain sea areas around its own territory. India, which was in a potentially confrontational relationship with the United States until the end of the Cold War, had been emphasizing area denial but has since increased its investment ratio in the maritime domain as the strategic value of the Indian Ocean has increased with its own economic growth. China's military activities in the maritime domain are often explained as area denial, known as anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD), but while around 2010 its force composition tilted toward area denial, it has since increased its ratio of investment in sea control. Tables 12.2 through 12.7 summarize the analytical results derived through the case studies in Sections II and III, and the evaluation of the ability to conduct high-intensity conventional warfare is restated in the case studies. This evaluation scale is also restated in Table 12.1.

The evaluation scale is indicated on a 5-point scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest. However, when some items are considered to be in a transitional stage of evaluation and it is difficult to indicate them with a single number, they are sometimes indicated as “2 $\Rightarrow$ 3.”

Table 12.2 Assessment of U.S. maritime strategy (Table 5.3 republished)

	Late Cold War (1980–1989)	Post-Cold War global war on terrorism (1990–2009)	China's maritime expansion (2010–2023)
Area denial	3	3	3
Sea control	4	5	4
Power projection	5	5	5

Source Prepared by the author

Table 12.3 Assessment of U.K. maritime strategy (Table 6.6 republished)

	Late Cold War (1980–1989)	Since the end of the Cold War (1990–2023)
Area denial	3	2
Sea control	3	3⇒2
Power projection	2	2

Source Prepared by the author

12.1.1 United States

In principle, the United States has maintained global superiority in sea control and has secured its own military superiority through power projection based on this premise. However, while the United States has maintained basic sea control over most of the open seas, the area denial practiced by the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War and by China in the Indo-Pacific theater since the early years of the twenty-first century has impeded sea control, which is a precondition for the United States to be able to project force. If the United States recognizes that its own freedom of maneuver has reached a level where it is inhibited, the priority of sea control over power projection will increase. From a cost perspective, and considering the tyranny of distance, direct force deployment from U.S. territory is not efficient, and in the Indo-Pacific theater it is necessary to rely on Japan’s area denial as a forward deployment base.

12.1.2 United Kingdom

Since the “withdrawal from East of the Suez” policy of 1968, the United Kingdom has generally consistently reduced its forces, but at the end of the Cold War, in addition to sea control and power projection, it has maintained a certain degree of area denial in consideration of the advance of the Soviet Navy. After the Cold War, it has maintained limited power projection and sea control capabilities to the extent financially feasible, but these are effective only under conditions such as peacetime and low-intensity conflicts, and not at a level that can counter contemporary high-intensity conventional wars.

Since around 2015, the country has been putting large aircraft carriers back into service, and it is expected that its sea control capability will recover to some extent in the future (Table 12.3).

12.1.3 Japan

At the end of the Cold War, in order to respond to the Soviet Union’s growing naval and air power, Japan substantively intensified its investments in area denial

Table 12.4 Assessment of Japan’s maritime strategy (Table 7.4 republished)

	Late Cold War (1980–1989)	International contributions and expanding influence in the Post-Cold War Era (1990–2009)	China’s maritime expansion (2010–2023)
Area denial	3	3	3
Sea control	2⇒3	3	3
Power projection	1	1	1⇒3

Source Prepared by the author

capabilities, including air defense and anti-submarine warfare, whilst concurrently providing support to a considerable degree to its ally, the United States, in the domain of sea control. On the other hand, since the Cold War, Japan has been striving to strengthen its sea control as a means to expand its national interests.

In the twenty-first century, in response to China’s maritime expansion, Japan is once again faced with the need to share resource allocation between sea control and area denial. This is intended to offset China’s ability to prevent Japan’s own area denial and so maintain a power projection base for its ally (the United States). Currently, Japan is rapidly deploying weapons like anti-surface cruise missiles and will have a certain level of power projection capability within a few years (Table 12.4).

12.1.4 Russia

Toward the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union enhanced its sea and air forces, focusing on area denial, and greatly expanded its controllable sea area beyond its own shores. Subsequent to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia contended with grave fiscal constraints which precipitated a substantial diminution and obsolescence of its conventional military forces. It therefore prioritized the maintenance of area denial capabilities such as attack submarines and long-range bombers. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, its power projection capability has been focused almost exclusively on nuclear forces, but since 2015 it has been using conventional forces to a limited extent, including cruise missile attacks against religious extremists in the Middle East. On the other hand, it has no intention of competing with the United States over sea control in the maritime domain, and there is no prospect of rebuilding a sea control capability similar to that of the Soviet era. Due to the loss of land forces in the war in Ukraine and other factors, the Russian military is expected to become more dependent on nuclear forces in the future, and the priority of maritime forces as conventional forces is relatively low (Table 12.5).

Table 12.5 Assessment of Russia's maritime strategy (Table 9.3 republished)

	End of the Cold War (1980–1989)	Post-Cold War economic poverty (1990–2009)	Military force restructuring after 2010 (2010–2023)
Area denial	4	3	3
Sea control	4	2	2
Power projection	3	2	3

Source Prepared by the author

12.1.5 India

Since the 1970s, U.S. intervention in the Third Indo-Pakistan War and other events led India to invest resources in the development of submarine warfare capability and to emphasize area denial with U.S. carrier task forces in mind. After the Cold War, as relations with the United States improved, India began to emphasize the strengthening of sea control at the theater level, centering on large surface combatant ships and aircraft carriers, in order to secure superiority in the Indian Ocean region. Regarding power projection capability, it plays only a supplementary role in surface warfare.

During the timeframe in question, India neither possessed the aspiration nor the capability to enact sea control or power projection beyond the Indian Ocean, nor did it exhibit any intention to manifest large-scale power projection within the Indian Ocean. On the other hand, India is to a certain extent wary of China's advance west of the Strait of Malacca and the expansion of its sea control capabilities. In order to curb this, in addition to its own sea control capabilities and a certain degree of area denial capabilities, it is actively supporting the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries in capacity building, particularly by strengthening area denial in countries subject to support (Table 12.6).

Table 12.6 Assessment of India's maritime strategy (Table 10.3 republished)

	Before the end of the Cold War and economic development (1980–1989)	Economic development and military modernization before and after the end of the Cold War (1990–2009)	Turnaround in relations with the U.S. China's maritime expansion (2010–2023)
Area denial	1	3	3⇒2
Sea control	2	2	3
Power projection	1	1	2

Source Prepared by the author

Table 12.7 Assessment of China’s maritime strategy (Table 11.3 republished)

	Before the start of military modernization (1980–1992)	Development of A2/AD Strategy (1993–2009)	Establishment of local superiority in the ocean (2010–2023)
Area denial	2	3	3⇒4
Sea control	1	2	3
Power projection	1	1	3

Source Prepared by the author

12.1.6 China

Until the end of the twentieth century, the scope of China’s maritime military capabilities was constrained, attributable to modernization lags, and was primarily devised to offer logistical backing for ground forces as well as coastal defense initiatives. Subsequently, against the backdrop of rapid economic development, China has promoted area denial in order to reject the projection of superior U.S. forces and, until around 2010, it placed the highest priority on strengthening area denial.

Subsequently, China has continued to strengthen its area denial capabilities in the East China Sea, against Japan and the United States, and is seeking to enclose the South China Sea as its own sphere of influence. Furthermore, along with the establishment and expansion of its sphere of influence, it is improving its sea control capability to advance from its own coasts across the Strait of Malacca. In addition, it is investing in power projection for the purpose of responding to a Taiwan contingency and advancing to islands in the South China Sea and elsewhere, although its capabilities are somewhat limited at present (Table 12.7).

12.2 Patterns of Prioritizing for Strategic Objectives

Based on the analytical framework of area denial, sea control, and power projection, the factors that cause changes in the military strategic objectives of the six countries analyzed are identified, and it becomes clear that these factors have a complex relationship and influence on each other. In other words, the phenomena found in these observations are not only explainable in a country-specific manner, but there are some similarities that are common to each country. Although there is no “general theory” that explains them with a single model or pattern of analysis common to all the countries analyzed, it is possible to classify them into several patterns by following which of the three factors (area denial, sea control, and power projection) is emphasized in the allocation of resources.

First, the United States has consistently influenced the military strategies of other countries by maintaining the most powerful military force during the period of analysis. The United States, which has consistently underscored sea control and power

projection, thereby generally preserving maritime military supremacy, exhibits a distinct strategic pattern in comparison to the other five nations under consideration. This distinction is evident in its proactive determination to prioritize sea control or power projection, which is driven by its own strategic choices rather than as a response to the actions of other states.

Next, let us look at three cases: the United Kingdom, Japan in the post-Cold War period, and India after around 2001, when its relations with the United States improved and the strategic value of the Indian Ocean was recognized. An observable pattern emerged wherein the three nations enhanced their investment in sea control or power projection. This strategic behavior was underpinned by a relatively diminished emphasis on area denial, attributed to the lack of an immediate, formidable military threat within their respective vicinities, coupled with the acknowledgment of American military preeminence in the maritime domain. This approach was geared towards safeguarding their international interests and amplifying their geopolitical influence.

After around 2010, when China's maritime expansion became more pronounced, Japan needed to invest not only in sea control but also in area denial, as it did when it confronted the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War. In contrast, China has found it necessary to fortify its sea control capabilities to ensure the security of sea lines of communications, which are integral to its economic vitality, and to implement area denial strategies in relation to the United States. These two cases represent a pattern that requires simultaneous investment in area denial and sea control.

Ultimately, should a state not concede to the maritime military supremacy of the United States and opt for a confrontational stance, it will invariably assign utmost precedence to area denial. This strategic choice serves as a countermeasure to inhibit the United States from leveraging its sea control for force projection purposes. Three cases fall into this pattern: Russia and India from around the time of the end of the Cold War to the beginning of the twenty-first century, and China until around 2010, which placed the highest priority on area denial. In summary, there are nine cases: one case each for the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia, and two cases each for Japan, India, and China, which can be organized into four patterns as shown in Table 12.8.¹

Pattern 1: Emphasis on Force Protection Based on Sea Control

Pattern 1 addresses the United States only. In principle, the United States emphasizes power projection on the basis of sea control, but when it perceives a situation in which sea control is impeded by a challenger, the priority of sea control is increased.

Case 1: United States (all periods analyzed)

Since World War II, the United States has been the most powerful power in the maritime domain that is, for the more than 75 years since the United Kingdom turned over its military superiority in the maritime domain to the United States. During the Cold War, the United States maintained its lead in the long-term competition by demonstrating military superiority over the Soviet Union and the members of the Warsaw Pact, while at the same time it was essential for its allies to have superiority in sea control to ensure the reliability of *extended deterrence*. This required superiority in the maritime domain and the ability to project power from the sea to land. Although

Table 12.8 Four patterns derived from the analysis results

Pattern	Applicable case	Outline
1	(1) U.S.A	Emphasis on power projection based on sea control Priority for sea control is increased when it is recognized that sea control has been interfered with
2	(2) United Kingdom (3) Japan (post-Cold War period) (4) India (since ca. 2001)	Accepts U.S. military superiority in the maritime domain No high intensive and imminent military threat nearby the country Because the importance of area denial is relatively low, emphasis is placed on sea control to secure national interests and expand influence, and, in some cases, on power projection
3	(5) Japan (end of the Cold War and after about 2010) (6) China (since approx. 2010)	High intensive and imminent military threats exists in the vicinity of the country, necessitating investment in the area denial High dependence on sea lines of communications, simultaneous investment in sea control and area denial are necessary
4	(vii) Russia (8) India (until about 2000) (ix) China (until about 2009)	Not accepting U.S.' military superiority in the maritime domain To deny the power projection based on U.S.' sea control, the area denial is of the utmost importance

Source Prepared by the author

outside the scope of this report's analysis, the Kennedy administration's "flexible response strategy" planned to respond "2-1/2 War," i.e., to maintain a force that could respond to global adversaries in ideological conflicts, such as the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, as well as to one or more other regional conflicts.²

Until the end of the Cold War, the United States needed to maintain its commitment to its allies facing interference or threats from the Eastern camp in order to maintain the credibility of extended deterrence to its allies. The tools for this were nuclear forces and conventional power projection.

After the end of the Cold War, expanding the United States' own national interests and maintaining normative values such as economic liberalism, democracy, and law and order were inextricably linked. In this context, freedom of navigation in the maritime domain must be maintained for the sake of economic liberalism. The overwhelming maritime dominance of the United States, i.e., the projection of force based on maritime superiority, was the most important tool for realizing the expansion of democratic values of engagement and intervention in the post-Cold War era. Later, in the twenty-first century, China expanded its military power as a challenger in the maritime domain. Consequently, it is probable that the United States regards the

assertion of sea control as a fundamental prerequisite for manifesting power projection capabilities, rather than perceiving power projection as an isolated strategic end. Figure 12.1 graphically illustrates the discussion up to this point.

Historically, the United States has never seen a strong adversary emerge in its vicinity, and there was little need to pursue extensive area denial capabilities. Throughout the Cold War, in its capacity as the Western camp's figurehead, and subsequently in the post-Cold War era, to sustain its hegemonic stance within the global economic order, it has been imperative for the United States to uphold a capacity for power projection. This capability enables the dissemination of political influence or military might, concurrently with the retention of sea control. Therefore, as long as the globalization of the world is maintained and the United States continues to find its vital national interests are best served by this process, then it is hard to imagine that the U.S. would cede its sea control to others or its superiority in the oceans. It can also be assumed that the United States will continue to plan to project its forces from the sea to land on the premise of this sea control. Should a contender arise, it is anticipated that the United States would prioritize sea control as a strategic measure to neutralize such a challenger.

Pattern 2: Emphasizes sea control and, depending on the situation, power projection, while relatively neglecting area denial.

Pattern 2 aligns with scenarios wherein, fundamentally, there is an absence of a significant threat to the maritime sphere proximate to the nation under consideration. Since the United States has maintained military superiority in the maritime domain throughout the period analyzed in this book, cases that fall under this pattern are necessarily those that apply to U.S. allies or friends that accept U.S. superiority in the maritime domain.

Such a state would complement U.S. control of the seas, stabilize its own sea lines of communications, and in some cases, in an environment where it can use stable oceans, it would be able to exercise its influence beyond the seas into other terrestrial domains. Pattern 2 corresponds to the three cases—(2), (3), and (4)—shown below. Compared to the United Kingdom and Japan, India appears at first glance to have a very different military-strategic environment. However, when viewed through the analytical framework of this study, India has no major threats in its own region and thus has little need to invest in area denial on a priority basis and can invest heavily in sea control. Therefore, one should view India rather than Japan as being in a military-strategic environment similar to that of the United Kingdom in 2023.

Case 2: United Kingdom (all periods analyzed)

The United Kingdom has consistently complemented U.S. sea control and as a major member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) it has provided its allies with a limited level of sea control and power projection capabilities in terms of geography and capability. At the end of the Cold War, the United Kingdom did not perceive a serious threat in the waters surrounding it in the European theater, which was dominated by ground warfare, and it is no exaggeration to note that there is no serious threat after the Cold War either. Therefore, there has been no need to devote significant resources to area denial, and it falls into Pattern 2 throughout the period under analysis.

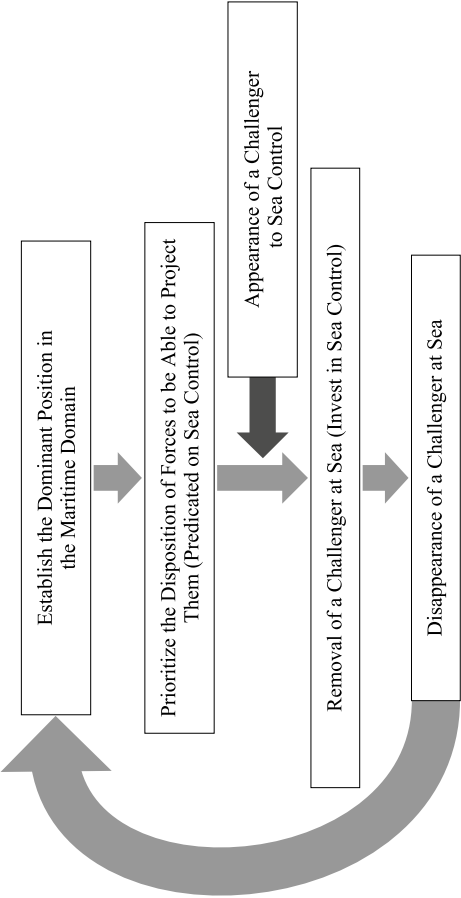


Fig. 12.1 U.S. strategic objective-setting flow in the maritime domain. *Source* Prepared by the author

Case 3: Japan (post-Cold War period)

From the end of the Cold War to the onset of the twenty-first century—that is, subsequent to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which removed a considerable threat, and prior to China’s enhancement of its military might and its substantial expansion into the maritime arena—Japan evolved its international field of operations within the framework of its collaborative engagement with the global community. This was a way of expanding Japan’s national interests by strengthening its own sea control while relying on the maritime supremacy of the United States and the stability of the maritime domain that comes from it.

Case 4: India (generally since about 2001)

Since the cessation of the Cold War, which heralded an improvement in relations with the United States, India has incrementally amplified its engagement in maritime affairs. This increased focus is attributable to its collaborative approach to the War on Terrorism, its swift economic advancement, and its geopolitical significance to the United States as a potential counterbalance to China’s maritime expansion. This applies to the period from around 2001 to 2023.

Pattern 3: Pursuing Both Area Denial and Sea Control

Pattern 3 delineates a scenario where a nation accentuates area denial, responding to the presence of a maritime threat of significant magnitude within its region, while concurrently necessitating investments in sea control to safeguard resources or sustain reliance on maritime commerce. This applies both to cases where a country is in a confrontational relationship with the United States and strengthens its area denial in order to challenge U.S. sea control or power projection and, conversely, where a strong challenger to the United States and itself exists in its vicinity and investment in area denial is required to offset that threat.

Pattern 3 consists of two cases (5) and (6), which involve Japan and China as follows. In 2023, both Japan and China face off against each other across the East China Sea, which is a narrow sea area in terms of both countries’ high dependence on sea lines of communications and modern military capabilities, especially advanced C4ISRT capabilities. Therefore, they need to improve both area denial and sea control and have similar strategic objectives in the maritime domain.

Case 5: Japan (end of the Cold War and after about 2010)

Both the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War and China since around 2010 expanded their maritime domain with their powerful military power, and the Japanese mainland and surrounding maritime waters are now within their sphere of influence. Hence, there is a compelling requirement to counteract such area denial. Simultaneously, to navigate beyond this predicament, it is essential to bolster U.S. sea control, which is experiencing a waning of its relative preeminence, and to dedicate resources towards maritime dominance for the advancement of its own national interests.

Case 6: China (since about 2010)

Since the 1990s, China has rapidly expanded its area denial capability, which is exemplified by its A2/AD strategy, and by around 2010 it had attained a strategic posture from which it may be anticipated to secure regional wartime advantages in the East China Sea, South China Sea, and additional maritime areas, supplementing its jurisdictional waters inclusive of the Yellow Sea and Bohai Sea. Meanwhile,

China's rapidly growing economy is increasing its dependence on overseas imports and exports and, in particular, much of its national interest depends on the waters of the Indian Ocean from the South China Sea through the Strait of Malacca to the Middle East. These waters are controlled by the United States and India, whose strategic interests coincide with those of the U.S. Therefore, in order to eliminate this situation in the future, the degree of China's investment in sea control has been increasing.

Pattern 4: Focus Exclusively on Area Denial

This pattern includes cases in which a nation does not accept U.S. military superiority in the maritime domain and, as a top strategic goal in its maritime military strategy, rejects U.S. sea control and power projection. It also includes cases in which the state concerned either does not rely much on resource imports and economic activities via sea lines of communications, or does not have sufficient resources to be allocated to activities other than area denial vis-à-vis the United States, and thus does not have the capacity to develop its own sea control or power projection, so it focuses heavily on area denial.

The following three cases—(7), (8), and (9)—are applicable here. Russia, India, and China, which were examined in Part III, have all placed the highest priority on area denial, and have positioned the maritime domain not as an area in which they would expand their interests, but as an area in which threats would come. Therefore, there is a certain persuasiveness in the idea that these three countries can be regarded as land powers.

On the other hand, since India and China have since drastically changed their military-strategic approaches in the maritime domain, it clearly does not make sense to develop a definitive argument as to whether a particular country's military strategy is essentially that of a land power or sea power.

Case 7: Russia (all periods analyzed)

The major assets of the Soviet Union's naval and air forces in the 1980s were numerically very powerful. They challenged the superiority of the United States in the maritime domain, gaining regional superiority in their own coastal waters and other areas through their area denial capability vis-à-vis the United States. In light of this, the Soviet Union endeavored to augment the sway of the Eastern bloc within the ideological contest with the West and to broaden its maritime influence. However, its mastery over the open seas did not reach a degree that could facilitate a direct challenge to the United States. The Soviet Union/Russia has invariably assigned paramount significance to its nuclear prowess within the maritime domain, considering it as the bedrock of its naval strength. Particularly, its SSBNs, which constitute the linchpin of its second-strike capability, along with the ballistic missiles they transport, are viewed as central to this power. This point has remained constant before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union and throughout the period analyzed in this book.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia entered a period of serious economic stagnation, and its conventional forces were greatly reduced and became obsolete. Later, in the twenty-first century, the economic situation improved due to resource exports, and conventional forces are gradually being rebuilt. However, the resources

that can be allocated to conventional forces are limited, and in principle the main focus is on area denial to eliminate threats that arrive by the sea. Since its large surface vessels have not been sufficiently upgraded during the period under analysis, Russia has only limited power projection capabilities, such as cruise missile attack capability, and is not at the level to conduct high-intensity conventional warfare outside its own area denial zone.

Case 8: India (end of Cold War)

Due to the Third Indo-Pakistan War and other factors, India in the late Cold War period was potentially at odds with the United States, which was promoting military cooperation with Pakistan under the Cold War structure. India's economic development had only just begun and it had disputes on land with Pakistan, China, and Bangladesh, making it difficult to allocate sufficient resources to the maritime domain. Consequently, India has prioritized the enhancement of its submarine fleet, with an emphasis on forestalling the proximate operations of U.S. Navy carrier battle groups.

Case 9: China (from the end of 1990s to about 2009)

After the experiences of the 1991 Gulf War and the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996, modernization was promoted with the goal of denying U.S. force projection. It was called the A2/AD strategy and its objective was to win "local wars in a high-tech environment." During this period, China focused on modernizing its submarine forces, long-range attack aircraft, cruise missiles, or air defense missile networks, rather than large surface combat vessels.

Based on the above analytical framework of area denial, sea control, and power projection, the six countries subject to analysis were classified into four patterns for a total of nine cases, with two cases each for Japan, India, and China, whose major military strategic objectives changed during the period under analysis.

Through these categorizations, it was determined which of the six countries analyzed had their military strategic objectives centered on area denial, sea control, or power projection, based on the analytical framework of this book. It became clear that even states with apparently very different geographical and political environments have military strategic objectives that are quite similar depending on the situation and can therefore be explained in a way that differs from the conventional conceptual discussion of land power versus sea power. In other words, the maritime military strategy of each country can now be more accurately analyzed and understood through the analytical framework presented in this book.

12.3 A Causal Inference Model of Modern Maritime Strategy

In this section, we dissect the results of our analysis and reconstruct them as a causal inference model. We show that causal inference holds for military strategies in the maritime domain in the period under analysis, albeit to a limited extent.

The military strategy of major countries in the maritime domain, excluding the United States, is determined primarily by “U.S. priorities regarding sea control and power projection.” This assertion holds under the three foundational assumptions of this study: (1) each participant acts rationally to a discernible degree, (2) nuclear deterrence is effective in principle, and (3) all participants have access to advanced military technologies, including C4ISR systems and capabilities for long-range precision strikes. The factor, “whether or not to accept the military superiority of the United States in the maritime domain,” constitutes the second independent variable, and two patterns of causal inference models are constructed based on this difference.

In the first pattern, the three factors that determine the dependent variable are: “U.S. priority regarding sea control and power projection,” “acceptance of U.S. military superiority in the maritime domain,” and the “existence of a strong military threat in the country’s vicinity.” In the second pattern, the three factors that determine the dependent variable are: “U.S. priority regarding sea control and power projection,” “non-acceptance of U.S. military superiority in the maritime domain,” and “plans to expand one’s own country’s interests in the maritime domain.”

In other words, although the military superiority of the United States is used as an independent variable, the starting point of the model is not the convergence of this to a single flow, but the difference at the national policy level of whether or not to accept U.S. military superiority. Therefore, two patterns, one for the case in which U.S. military superiority in the maritime domain is accepted and the other for the case in which it is not accepted, are aggregated and presented as one causal inference model (Fig. 12.2).

First, the dependent variable changes with respect to the nation that accepts the military superiority of the United States, according to whether there is or is not an influential nation in the neighborhood that could be a threat or whether the nation receives a military threat from another influential nation. Therefore, the variable, “whether or not there is a powerful state in the neighborhood that could be a threat,” is an affector that causes variation in the dependent variable.

Similarly, for states that do not accept the military superiority of the United States, there are two possible cases for the dependent variable: those that give priority to the defense of their own territory and do not challenge the United States in the maritime domain, and those that seek to expand their influence in the maritime domain in opposition to the United States. As a result of this variation, it is appropriate to indicate the affector of “whether the nation seeks to expand its own interests in the maritime domain, or whether it emphasizes area denial and concentrates on the preservation of its own territory.”

The dependent variable is the military strategy of each of the five countries other than the United States. Of these five countries, Japan, India, and China are divided into two cases each because they have changed their military strategic objectives during the period under analysis, as discussed previously, and thus there are eight patterns in total. Therefore, the causal inference model developed in this study is one in which eight dependent variables are derived from three assumptions, two independent variables, and two effectors.

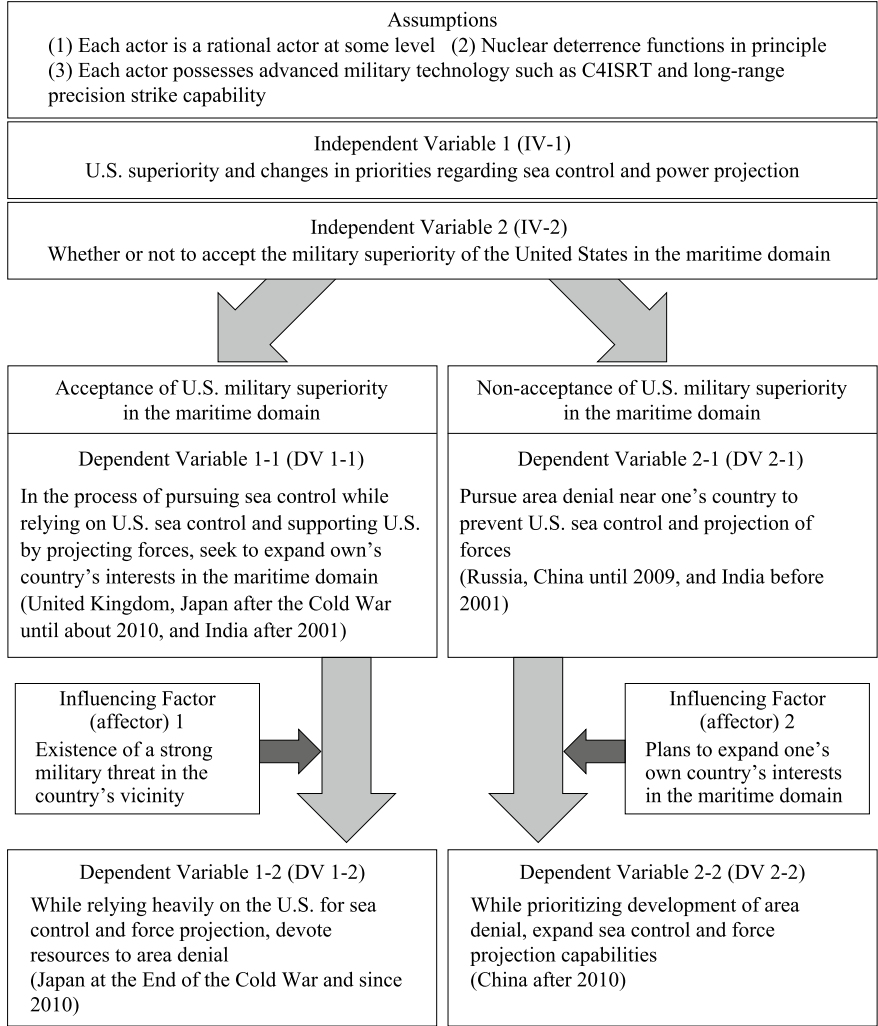


Fig. 12.2 Causal inference model for maritime strategy. *Source* Prepared by the author

The model reveals the following points. When a state that satisfies the three assumptions accepts U.S. superiority in sea control and power projection and changes in military strategic objectives, it gains the advantage of being protected by U.S. military superiority in the maritime domain, and thus emerges Dependent Variable 1–1 (DV1-1): “investment in its own sea control or power projection will increase, which will lead to the expansion of its interests or influence in its own maritime domain.” However, when a strong military threat emerges in the vicinity, Dependent Variable 1–2 (DV1-2) is seen: a causal relationship arises in which the state concerned

“needs to allocate resources not only for sea control or power projection but also for area denial to reject the threat.”

Similarly, if a state that satisfies the three assumptions does not accept U.S. superiority in sea control and power projection and U.S.’ changes in military strategic objectives, it will, in principle, look like Dependent Variable 2–1 (DV2-1), that is: “emphasize improvement in its own area denial in order to reject U.S. sea control or power projection.” If, on the other hand, the state depends on sea lines of communications for much of its economic prosperity and recognizes that it cannot abandon this dependence, then Dependent Variable 2–2 (DV2-2) is seen: “the necessity to invest in sea control or power projection at the same time as it develops its territorial rejection.”

By constructing such a causal inference model, it is relatively easy and accurate to analyze, for example, the military strategies of other countries in the maritime domain that are not the subject of analysis in this book. Moreover, if the assumptions are the same, the model can serve as a guideline for predicting with a certain degree of accuracy the military strategies of major countries in the maritime domain in the near future.

Here, it is necessary to examine whether this causal inference model fulfills the criteria for causal inference. Kume Ikuo, citing Takane Masaaki’s book, states that the following three conditions are necessary for a causal relationship to be established.³

- (1) There is a covariate relationship between the independent and dependent variables.
- (2) The change in the independent variable occurs before the change in the dependent variable.
- (3) Covariate relationships are observed even when controlling for other variables.

Initially, pertaining to (1) “covariate relationships,” it is evident that throughout the initial to mid-phases of the Cold War, the United States held a definitive advantage within the maritime sphere. However, by the year 1980, the temporal scope under investigation in this scholarly work, the Soviet Union had significantly enhanced its capabilities in area denial and sea control. Consequently, within certain maritime regions, the efforts of the United States to maintain sea control and execute power projection were potentially obstructed. As a result, the United States had to compete with “near-peer competitors” for dominance of the sea, and it was necessary to give priority to this competition. Subsequently, with the end of the Cold War, the U.S. military power showed overwhelming superiority, and through events like the Gulf War, U.S. superiority in power projection was demonstrated, consisting of long-range precision strike capability and C4ISR in conventional forces, among other factors. And this caused the reactions of other countries shown in the dependent variable. Therefore, it can be argued that “both independent and dependent variables have changed since the late Cold War.”

With regard to (2) “temporal precedence,” it is also clear from the discussion so far that “the assumptions and independent variables precede the dependent variable” with regard to the variables set up in this study.

Furthermore, regarding (3) “controlling variable,” while the six analyzed countries share the characteristics of being among the world’s top ten countries in terms of economic power and military spending, the dependent variable shows different values for each of the countries. The assumptions are the same for all six countries, and it can be assumed that there is no decisive factor other than the independent variable that determines the dependent variable. Although Japan is the only non-nuclear holder among the six countries, it is considered to be included in the mechanism of nuclear deterrence because Japan, as an ally of the United States, is included in the extended deterrence provided by the United States. Therefore, this is not a decisive issue as long as this book is an analysis of conventional forces.

Based on the above, it can be said that the causal inference model presented in this book satisfies the three conditions in principle, and therefore meets the requirements for causal inference to a certain degree. Moreover, this causal inference model explains the dependent variable from a relatively small number of assumptions and independent variables. So it can be applied to the analysis of the military strategies of other major countries in the maritime domain as long as the assumptions are satisfied. Therefore, it can also be useful in predicting situations in the near future. For example, at the beginning of this chapter, I stated that today, in 2023, India is emphasizing sea control in the Indian Ocean and is in a maritime strategic environment similar to that of the United Kingdom. In the event that China proceeds to construct extensive military installations within allied nations in the vicinity of the Indian Ocean, including but not limited to Pakistan, thereby enabling the execution of large-scale military maneuvers to the west of the Malacca Strait at its discretion, it would indicate a substantial acquisition of maritime dominance in the region. Consequently, this development would necessitate India, analogous to the contemporary strategy of Japan, to prioritize and allocate resources towards the enhancement of sea control and the fortification of area denial capacities.

Some additional remarks are necessary at this point. In contemporary history, the maritime domain has experienced periods of hegemony by a singular nation-state; notably, the United Kingdom held predominance prior to the Second World War, succeeded by the United States subsequent to the conflict. Preceding epochs witnessed various sovereign entities asserting naval dominance. In contrast, the Soviet Union in the late Cold War and China since around 2010 have been challenging the United States in the Asia-Pacific theater. However, the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War did not have the capability to compete with the United States for control of the seas outside its own sphere of area denial. And if we look at China in 2023 in terms of its relative power ratio vis-à-vis the United States, China will not reach a level where it can surpass the United States.

After all, no nation has emerged since World War II, including during the period analyzed in this report, with equal or superior capabilities to the United States, including control of the open seas. Therefore, based on the three assumptions presented, the causal inference model of this book is established by correctly placing U.S. military superiority in the maritime domain and its priority in sea control or power projection as independent variables. However, the independent variable in this causal inference does not necessarily hold only under the condition of military

superiority of a specific nation, the United States, in the maritime domain. Even if a nation were to replace the United States and assume a superior position in the maritime domain, the results of this analysis would, in principle, hold as long as the assumptions are maintained.

However, if the United States and its challenger have roughly equal power and are competing for superiority in the maritime domain, it is very difficult at this point to draw convincing inferences about what situations might arise in the process and what maritime military strategies the other major powers might choose. It remains to be seen to what extent the arguments in this book can be applied during periods of power transitions.

12.4 Addendum: Can the Possibility of Nuclear Escalation and Future Technological Innovation Negate the Arguments in This Book?

This concludes the analysis, but I would like to end this book by mentioning, as a corollary, the factors that change the three assumptions on which the analysis in this book is based. The discussion in this addendum will be useful in determining whether or not this study needs to be updated in the future.

First, among the three assumptions, I address issues related to the following two points, i.e., “Will sovereign states—the main actors in military strategy—continue to be rational actors, avoiding acts of mass destruction and killing,” and “Will nuclear deterrence continue to function in a multipolar world?” These are areas where empirical discussions based on concrete cases are extremely difficult, and they tend to end up being conceptual discussions. However, in the Ukrainian War that broke out in 2022, Russia invaded neighboring Ukraine while using the threat of limited use of nuclear weapons. In light of this fact, we cannot turn away from the possibility of nuclear escalation in interstate wars, which has been considered unrealistic since the end of the Cold War.

Russia has inherited a variety of non-strategic nuclear weapons from the Soviet era and has deployed Iskander short-range ballistic missiles and other missiles during this century and is also developing and deploying hypersonic glide vehicles such as Avangard. These means of delivery developed by Russia are considered difficult to intercept by conventional ballistic missile defense systems such as the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense and Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense. Therefore, when threatened with the use of limited non-strategic nuclear weapons through these means of delivery, NATO nations may decide to accept the risk of escalation to the nuclear level and ask themselves, “Will we respond with nuclear weapons against nuclear weapons?” NATO would be faced with the dilemma of whether to accept the risk of escalation to the nuclear level and “respond with nuclear weapons against nuclear

weapons,” or whether to use its superiority in conventional forces to “suggest large-scale retaliation with conventional forces to dissuade Russia from using nuclear weapons,” or whether to yield to the threat.

As a result, military doctrine or strategy based on the concept of so-called “de-escalation,”⁴ (escalate to de-escalate strategy) in which Russia would take advantage of a high-intensity conventional war at the level of limited use of non-strategic nuclear weapons to stabilize itself in a convenient situation, will be called into question. Russia is not only ensuring escalation dominance with non-strategic nuclear weapons, but is also attempting “de-escalation” by threatening Ukraine and NATO countries by hinting at the limited use of nuclear weapons in the event of a war in Ukraine from 2022, which would be a failure of deterrence.

At this point, Russia, while making many nuclear threats, has not yet decided to actually use nuclear weapons, but rather the war in Ukraine so far has shown how difficult it is to make “limited use” of nuclear weapons. The apprehension regarding the culmination of conflicts in a terminal war, exemplified by the deployment of strategic nuclear arsenals, has not come to fruition. It is likely that stability at the level of strategic nuclear capabilities has been preserved. Nevertheless, it is also true that the European theater has already become unstable at the level of non-strategic nuclear weapons. On the other hand, China’s nuclear strategy, including the number of nuclear warheads possessed, is unclear in many areas, but it is not threatening neighboring countries with nuclear weapons like Russia has done. In the scenario where China, accruing local military preeminence, resorts to the coercion of employing nuclear arms on a limited scale, the United States and its allies would face the inability to deter China through conventional military reprisal. This stands in contrast to the situation with Russia, which does not match NATO in terms of conventional military strength.

At the end of Chap. 3, this book, citing Snyder’s “stability-instability paradox,” states that escalation to nuclear and high-intensity conventional war is unlikely, and that stability at that level would lead to prolonged low-intensity conflicts and confrontations. Using this idea as a basis for an overview of the current world, the risk of “high-intensity war with limited use of nuclear weapons” has already emerged in the European theater. In Asia, on the other hand, the nuclear level is stable, but the level of high-intensity conventional war, such as a Taiwan contingency, is becoming somewhat unstable. Table 12.9 shows the author’s analysis of nuclear thresholds for Europe and Asia taken from a chapter he contributed as part of a 2023 book comparing NATO and Japan.

In the unlikely event that humanity ever actually uses nuclear weaponry again, then the fundamental premise of this book is likely to break down. We then need to address the very difficult problem of building a maritime military strategy in light of nuclear escalation.

Herman Kahn titled one of his books *Thinking About the Unthinkable* in which he presented an analytical framework for a possible nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union in the late Cold War and showed how to achieve extended deterrence and escalation dominance in the West. He called his thought process a “gedanken (thought) experiment.”⁵ His thought experiment leads to a major political

Table 12.9 Nuclear thresholds in Europe and Asia

Region severity	Europe	Asian
Strategic nuclear warfare	<i>Stability</i>	
High intensive warfare with non-strategic nuclear weapons	Instability (threat of use (nuclear blackmail) and manifestation of risk)	<i>Stability</i>
High Intensive Conventional Warfare	Instability (Failure of deterrence/ outbreak of war)	Slightly unstable (development of advanced weapons and their demonstration)
Low-intensive territorial dispute		Instability (Outbreak of conflict/ prolonged)

Source Ushirogata Keitarō, “Ōshū to Ajia ni okeru ‘Kakuno Shikiichi’: Hisenryaku Kaku o Meguru Shikō Jikken (The Difference in ‘Nuclear Thresholds’ between Europe and Asia: A Thought Experiment as to Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons),” in Iwama Yōko, ed., *Kaku Kyōyū no Genjitsu; NATO no Keiken to Nihon* (The Reality of Nuclear Sharing Arrangement: NATO’s Experience and Japan), Shinzansha, 2023

and military question today: What are the implications for maritime strategy of the revival of “non-strategic nuclear weapons,” a trend that has long remained an unrealistic scenario since the end of the Cold War, and which has resurfaced through the war in Ukraine?

In addition, it is necessary to confirm the current status (as of the time of this writing) of the technical situation related to the third assumption, i.e., “each actor possesses advanced military technology such as C4ISRT and long-range precision strike capabilities.” The current discourse is informed by principles central to this volume’s analysis, specifically, the preemptive strike benefit deriving from sophisticated networks for search, detection, and identification, such as C4ISRT, coupled with long-range precision strike capabilities. This is compounded by the escalating challenges of power projection due to the advancement of area denial strategies. Consequently, this evolves into a concept of ‘mutual area denial’ or a ‘stalemate at the level of high-intensity conventional warfare within the maritime context’, as theorized in the analytical framework.

Advanced military technology, the primary assumption of this book, consists of two main components: the C4ISRT system for search, detection, and identification, and long-range precision strike capability against networks and targets derived from these systems. Since the late Cold War, the United States has frequently discussed various trends and concepts in military strategy, which are expressed in a variety of vocabularies. However, as concepts, they can generally be summarized in those two points.

In the late Cold War, the Air-Land Battle Concept and the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) Star Wars Concept were based on the enhancement of early warning,

search, and detection assets in the air or space domain and long-range precision strike from air-powered or space domains. In the early 1980s, Mearsheimer posited that the deployment of PGM (precision-guided munitions) played a crucial role in reinforcing deterrence by denial against the Warsaw Pact's superior ground forces in the European theatre.⁶

Later, in the post-Cold War period, information technology or networking had a major impact on military power. Admiral William Owens, Deputy Chief of U.S. Naval Operations, argued that the integration of battlespace awareness, advanced C4I, and precision force use through a "system of systems" would be at the core of the new military revolution and future integrated military operations.⁷

The concept proposed by Owens was later developed into network centric warfare (NCW) by Arthur Cebrowski and others and became the central operational concept of the U.S. Navy in the early twenty-first century. NCW is an architecture that consists of a network of various search and other assets. It is based on the concept of real-time information-sharing among assets through means such as the global command control system (GCCS) and tactical data link (Link 11/16) while ensuring information superiority. The network is composed of multiple dimensions, including the global level, the tactical level, and through coordination among assets, such as cooperative engagement capability (CEC). The objective is not to achieve superiority or inferiority at the platform (individual asset) level, but rather for the network as a whole to rapidly and accurately capture and efficiently strike opponents at long range.⁸

The idea of achieving military superiority through long-range precision detection and precision-guided strike capabilities in conventional forces is basically shared even today. And the military superiority referred to in China's A2/AD strategy and its corresponding air-sea battle or "third offset strategy" can be attributed to this point. In other words, these ideas are not only about surface, underwater, or aerial operations, but about the ability to guarantee superiority by "detecting the enemy earlier and attacking accurately from a distance." Simply put, it promises superiority in first-strike capability at the operational and tactical levels.

However, future technological developments may overturn this principle of first strike advantage based on C4ISRT and long-range precision strike capability. In this book, it has been mentioned that submarines have various uses in different countries, but most commonly they are used for area denial by taking advantage of their covert nature to approach and sink an opposing surface vessel. At the strategic level, it is the defense of territory, but at the tactical level, it means an aggressive attack against the enemy surface forces.

Yet, the U.S. Navy as well as Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force are currently developing a theater-wide area anti-submarine warfare (theater ASW) capability that expands the area of operation to the theater level, rather than the anti-submarine warfare that has traditionally been conducted by a few surface combatants and patrol aircraft within a few kilometers to several dozen kilometers radius of the area of operation. This is built on a search network design that optimizes the combination and arrangement of various assets through analytical software based on a database of anti-submarine maritime information collected over a long period of time.

Unlike radio wave propagation in the air, sound wave transmission patterns in the sea are extremely complex, and due to the influence of ocean currents and bottom topography, it is not easy to reliably detect submarines in the sea, even with high-powered sonar. Therefore, submarines can maintain their stealth and launch surprise attacks. However, in the sea area where this wide-area anti-submarine warfare is feasible, submarines can capture and attack enemy submarines in the sea from outside the range of long torpedoes or anti-ship missiles equipped by the enemy, which significantly reduces the ability of submarines to launch surprise attacks. In other words, there will be cases in which the essential superiority of the undersea domain over the maritime domain will be overturned. This implies a potential diminution in the susceptibility of naval surface combatants, which are integral to power projection capabilities, to the threat posed by submarine warfare.

Similarly, long-range strike aircraft or long-range cruise missiles launched from ground bases are the core assets of area denial. In order to intercept missiles that enter from a distance, the air defense system must respond within a very short time after detection and, whether they are artillery or anti-aircraft missiles, the air defense system must calculate their future location based on complex calculations of the enemy missile's flight pattern, speed, and altitude before intercepting them. However, many anti-ship missiles fly at low altitudes near the sea surface and cannot be detected until just before they hit. When attacked simultaneously by multiple such missiles, the air defense systems of surface combatants are saturated.⁹

However, the laser weapon system (LaWS) (or called "directed energy weapon" (DEW)) currently under development by the U.S. Navy is designed to directly aim at the current position of an incoming missile and then attack it with a laser, eliminating the need to calculate future positions and reload ammunition, and requiring very little time for interception.¹⁰ If such a weapon is put into practical use, surface combatant vessels that aim to project power are expected to have extremely high survivability against enemy's air attacks. In the author's report on the future strategy of the Maritime Self-Defense Force, I described this as a "a potential game changer."¹¹ The U.S. Congressional Research Service's report on future military technologies for the U.S. Navy placed particular emphasis on three types of technologies: solid state lasers, electromagnetic railguns, and hypervelocity projectiles, and rated the practical application of any one of these as a "game changer" and the application of two or more as a "revolution."¹²

Of course, it is not clear to what extent such innovations in anti-submarine warfare and anti-aircraft warfare will actually be realized, and to what extent they will affect the military strategies of major countries. Also, with regard to the theater ASW capability or laser weapon system as a concrete example, the operational aspects will vary greatly depending on which country has this capability, such as a country that exercises area denial, one that promotes the strengthening of sea control, or a country that plans power projection. Furthermore, if all relevant actors had such technology, how it would affect the analytical framework of this book is beyond the realm of the imagination and cannot be empirically analyzed at this time.

In any case, however, these technological innovations could significantly change the future face of warfare in the maritime domain. In particular, they may have a

significant impact on some of the issues identified at the level of theoretical analysis at the end of Chap. 1, namely, the “increased difficulty of power projection.” In such a case, it is necessary to review the idea of “mutual area denial,” which means that “in order to efficiently execute power projection while localizing the influence of the tyranny of distance on the area denial, it is necessary to strengthen area denial in order to secure a base for power projection in the opponent’s area of denial.” If the dominance of area denial is reduced and it becomes easier to use power projection while securing freedom of maneuver, the possibility cannot be ruled out that the “military stalemate in the maritime domain” at the level of high-intensity conventional warfare can be overcome. Future critiques or amendments to this book must conscientiously consider these technological advancements.

Notes

1. India and China are included in the nine analyzed cases because they do not fulfill the assumption of this document that they have advanced military technology such as C4ISRT, although they include situations before they started their military modernization during the period under analysis.
2. U.S. Department of Defense, *Statement of Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird on the FY 1972–76 Defense Program and the 1972 Defense Budget*, p. 157.
3. Ikuo Kume, *Genin o Suiron Suru: Seiji Bunseki Hōhōron no Susume* (Reasoning about Causes: Recommendations for Political Analysis Methodology), Yūhikaku, 2013, p. 15.
4. The exact phrase is “escalate to de-escalate,” i.e., escalate the situation once in order to bring about de-escalation. See Nikolai Sokov, “Why Russia Calls a Limited Nuclear Strike ‘De-escalation,’” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists website*, March 13, 2014.
5. Herman Kahn, *Thinking About the Unthinkable in the 1980s*, Simon and Schuster, 1984), pp. 54–79.
6. John Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, Cornell University Press, 1983, pp. 14–15, pp. 200–201.
7. William Owens, “The Emerging System of Systems,” *Proceedings*, Volume 121/5/1, 107, U.S. Naval Institute (May 1995), p. 37.
8. Arthur Cebrowski and John Garstka, “Network-Centric Warfare: Its Origin and Future,” *Proceedings*, Volume 124/1/1, 139, U. S. Naval Institute (January 1998), pp. 30–31, 33.
9. These missiles are classified as sea skimming, high dive, and snaking types, respectively. See Chap. 4, Note 22 for detection range and reaction time of anti-ship missiles.
10. Also called directed energy weapon (DEW). See U.S. Navy Warfare Development Command, *Next: Advancing Electromagnetic Maneuver Warfare*, Volume 3, Number 2 (Summer/Fall 2015), pp. 12–15.
11. Ushirogata, “Kaijō Jieitai no Senryakuteki Hōkōsei to Sono Kadai,” p. 41.
12. Ronald O’Rourke, *Navy Lasers, Railguns, and Hypervelocity Projectiles: Background and Issues for Congress*, Congressional Research Service Report, August 14, 2017, p. 1.

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Afterword: (Some Very Personal Acknowledgments)

*This afterword was written in December 2018, before publishing the first Japanese edition.

The purpose of this book is to present an analytical framework that is as useful as possible for the study of military strategy in the maritime domain, where empirical studies have been insufficient in the past. In the conclusion chapter, I show that a certain level of causal inference can be established. As delineated in the Preface, the foundation of this tome rests upon empirical analysis and explanations, endeavoring to eschew value judgments and normative components to the greatest extent feasible.

The purpose of this book is to describe empirical strategic studies in the contemporary maritime domain. As I believe I have been able to accomplish the purpose throughout the book, I do not think it necessary to add any more in the Afterword. It is sufficient if this study provides the reader with some suggestions and some fodder for discussion of further ideas on strategic analysis and research methods.

Incidentally, this book would never have been written without certain strange coincidences, chance meetings, and the help of many people, as described below. Therefore, I would like to use this section to acknowledge those who helped along the way. This Afterword may seem strange to some readers because it is almost like a personal essay, in contrast to the way I have written throughout the book up to this point. However, it is an undeniable fact that an extremely great motivation in the process of bringing this book to fruition was my feeling of wanting to repay, in some small way, those who helped, through the results of my research. It is also necessary, I believe, to describe the twists and turns that led to this study being done and this book being published in the first place.

Although it might not be common practice, in the Acknowledgments, I would like to trace the story of this book back to the time when the Japanese version was first published. First, Mr. Uehara Masanobu of Keisō Shobō publishers made great efforts to help me publish the book, from the consideration of the book title to the proofreading of details, to correcting the author's bad habit of long sentences that are difficult to read and render them as simple as possible. As indicated in the endnotes and bibliography, this book cites many well-known and major works in the fields of social science methodology, international politics, and strategic studies, many

of which have been translated and published by Keisō Shobō. When I decided to publish my doctoral dissertation, the first thing that came to my mind was, “I want it to be published by Keisō Shobō.” I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Uehara for his willingness to accept the proposal.

Next, I would like to express my gratitude to the professors I have met during the course of my five years of serious study in this research area. During the course of writing my dissertation for the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) Security and International Studies Program, I received excellent advice and discipline from many professors. My mentor, Professor Michishita Narushige, who was my primary supervisor in the doctoral program, gave me precise advice and guidance from the drafting stage of my research plan. This advice ranged from the framework of the research plan to the individual references.

In the second year of my doctoral studies, I was struggling to finalize my research plan in preparation for my doctoral dissertation. Stuck in the conventional sea power theory or geopolitical viewpoint, I was unable to find a clear direction on how to organize the dualistic arguments of “sea control, power projection and area denial” or “land power vs. sea power” and the three analytical frameworks in this book. At that time, Professor Michishita advised me to apply the three analytical frameworks of “area denial, sea control, and power projection” directly to the case studies of each country, and this advice became the basis of this book. My repeated insistence in the text about “not getting caught up in the stereotypes of “land power vs. sea power” is in fact a rebuke to myself.

Professor Kitaoka Shinichi, who was also my advisor in the GRIPS doctoral program, gave me profound suggestions on “what is a neutral and empirical argument as well as an academic attitude” as well as on the foreign and security policies of modern and contemporary Japan. In his coursework on postwar Japanese diplomatic history, Professor Kitaoka’s calm, evidence-based discussion of extremely sensitive and political issues such as postwar compensation for the Pacific War and the comfort given by women, —all in front of students from many countries, including those from the countries concerned—was remarkable.

My other advisor, Professor Iwama Yōko, tapped into the major theories of international politics as we read through a series of major books. I am proud that this book contains suggestions for understanding things like the international system, but this would not have been possible without understanding the major theories of international relations, such as those of Carr, Morgenthau, Waltz, Mearsheimer, Nye, Keohane, Wendt, Buzan, and others that I learned through Professor Iwama’s course work.

Professor Iio Jun of GRIPS, trained me from the ground up in social science methodology, even though he was not my doctoral dissertation supervisor, and took time to give me appropriate advice on many occasions in addition to coursework. Professor Izumikawa Yasuhiro of the Faculty of Policy Studies at Chuo University served as an external referee for the final dissertation defense and gave me very useful advice on explaining methodological validity and modifying the causal inference model. Without their advice, this book would not have been able to maintain its rigor as a social science study.

In the process of turning 40 years old and acquiring a wide range of theories and historical facts on international politics, security theory, and strategic studies in a relatively short period of time, the people I met at the Maritime Self-Defense Force Command and Staff College, to which I belonged from summer 2011 to spring 2018, provided excellent instruction on security studies and important knowledge that cannot be replaced by any other. They have provided me with excellent guidance on security studies and important insights that are hard to replace. They are, in no particular order, former Rear Admiral (Ret.) Nakamura Susumu, Commander Yagi Naoto, Commander Ishihara Takahiro, Captain Hirayama Shigetoshi, Captain Yamamoto Katsuya, Captain Kitagawa Keizo (all ranks as of December 2018), and other senior officers in the research area. When I asked them if they knew of any good papers that would be helpful in this area of research, they immediately replied (in Kansai dialect, perhaps knowing I was from Western Japan), “Ushirogata, you should read this book, don’t you think?” I was able to publish my research in a tangible form only because I was blessed with such an environment where we could discuss various topics at any time.

In addition, Dr. Okuyama Masashi became a visiting scholar at the Maritime Self-Defense Force Command and Staff College, which gave me frequent opportunities for thought-provoking discussions on Colin Gray, Edward Luttwak, and other strategists. Dr. Matsubara Jikichirō, who was also a Ministry of Defense official and with whom I studied together in the GRIPS Security and International Affairs Program, accompanied me in many discussions on social science methodology and the collection of citations during the course of our struggles as doctoral students. Mr. Fuse Satoru, the current Washington Bureau Chief of TV Asahi, provided excellent insights into U.S. military strategy. Lieutenant Colonel Sakuma Kazunobu, a classmate of mine in the Department of International Relations at the National Defense Academy and currently an associate professor at the National Defense Academy, provided me with appropriate materials and literature on U.S. air force strategy, which was unknown to me. Mr. Maeda Yūji of the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) and I engaged in wide-ranging discussions on topics ranging from methodology to the merits and demerits of individual literature in the field of strategic research. Without these interactions, the persuasive power of this book would have been significantly reduced.

Having reached this point, I must next express my gratitude to those who supported the criminal trial related to the “Atago/Seitoku-Maru Collision” incident that occurred some 10 years ago in February 2008 when I was serving as the navigator on the MSDF destroyer *Atago*, and gave me the opportunity to start walking forward again. In May 2011, I was reinstated from criminal leave with the appeal trial still pending, but I had no future prospects or motivation as a naval officer, and I intended to leave the MSDF as soon as the trial was settled. But I also wondered, “What can I do after quitting the MSDF beyond just getting by? Even if there was something I wanted to do, would I have the ability to do it?”

In August of the same year, Vice Admiral Yoshida Masanori, who had accepted me into the Maritime Self-Defense Force Command and Staff College, called me into the Commandant’s office one day and said, “If you are critical of the Ministry

of Defense and the Maritime Self-Defense Force, that's fine, but you should develop your logical thinking and communicate it, not being bound by the logic and interests of the organization. Please consider going into academic research to contribute to studies on Japanese security and defense strategy." Convinced, I responded that I would not leave the MSDF."

The reason why I am still in the MSDF today and why I was able to accumulate wonderful experiences in GRIPS and other organizations is because I was put on trial but obtained a not-guilty verdict, overturning the prosecutor's argument. We had been separated from the organization and spent four years and two months fighting for our innocence from the first trial in Yokohama District Court to when the Tokyo High Court overturned the original decision. During that time, we had to go through more than 40 hearings and pre-trial court proceedings with our lawyers working almost without pay. The defense lawyers who assisted us in this enormous preparatory work were Mine Takao and Tezuka Akira, as well as Takashima Shirō, Banjo Hiroshi, and Tanaka Takahiro, who were classmates from junior high school and high school. In addition, I acknowledge the late Miyata Yoshinori, former Director General of the High Marine Accident Tribunal, and Commander Nagaiwa Tomohisa, who fought alongside us in court until the very end.

But that is not all. The defense lawyers and others who fought on my behalf in the trial gave me important suggestions on "how to persuade a critical opponent" and "what is a logical argument based on evidence." This commitment to "persuading others logically" has been a major catalyst for me to find meaning in the research field and to engage in empirical research.

And without the help of many people, including my classmates at the Nada Junior and Senior High Schools, and my seniors, classmates, and juniors at the National Defense Academy and the Maritime Self-Defense Force, who gave me tremendous moral and financial support in my difficult times, I could not have written this book, would not have pursued academic research, and would not be here today as a Maritime Self-Defense official. I cannot find words to express my gratitude to them. In the critical phase of writing my doctoral dissertation, what came to my mind again and again was the thought, "I must somehow complete my work in response to the expectations of those who supported me."

These are my acknowledgments to those who have supported me through the rapid changes in my circumstances over the past ten years and helped me to move forward. Looking back over the years, I feel that I was able to achieve the preliminary results of my research in this book in large part because of the training I received and the environment in which I was born and raised.

A quarter of a century ago, in 1993, I entered the Department of International Relations in my second year at the National Defense Academy, where I received instruction in international relations theory and chose political thought for my graduation project. In particular, I was interested in the questions, "How would the international system of sovereign states change after the Cold War?" and "How would the role of military power change with the end of the Cold War?" It was Professor Ariga Makoto who took the time to engage me in discussions about these big and fundamental questions. He was an assistant professor at the National Defense Academy's School of

Humanities and Sociology at that time, in 1997, and is currently the dean of the NDA's Graduate School of Integrated Security Studies. Adorno and Horkheimer's paradox of "the creation of civilization and barbarism by the enlightenment" in the "Preface," and Francis Fukuyama's discourse of "the victory of liberal democracy" at the beginning of Chap. 1, were also presented in the introduction to my 1997 graduation thesis, "Norms and Analysis," at the National Defense Academy's International Relations Department. Although somewhat exaggerated, in this context, this book is also the culmination of my own intellectual journey over the past quarter of a century.

I have been a surface warfare officer as well as a party to a criminal trial, and after many twists and turns, I have shifted my focus to academic research. When I think back on how I ended up here, I cannot help but feel the influence of the environment in which I was born and raised. From my earliest memories, I recall I was surrounded by fountain pens, typewriters, and countless books and documents. My affinity for reading, thinking, and discussing things can be attributed to the family environment in which I was born and raised: my father, Masao, a German literature scholar; my mother, Atsuko; and my sister, Shōko. I would like to thank my family for providing me with such a valuable cultural background.

Finally, I would like to conclude this book by expressing my sincere gratitude to my wife, Taeko, who has always cheerfully shared the hardships and joys of the past fifteen years or so, during which we spent anxious days together without a clear future and then struggled voluntarily to enter the research field, and to my son, Shintarō, who supported me through his daily growth, even when I felt like my heart was breaking.

Yokohama, Japan.

December 2018.

Ushirogata Keitarō.

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