Sea Power

In today's security environment where only one truly global naval force exists, it is easy to conflate the concepts of *sea power* and naval power when describing attributes of national power. But as you will study in this section most modern sea power theorists have generally accepted Albert Thayer Mahan's theoretical distinctions between sea and naval power.

Mahan equated national power with a nations' ability to accumulate wealth through economic activity and believed that sea power influenced national power. Mahan wrote that to become a major sea power, a nation needed a flourishing economy (to produce industrial and raw materials enough to care for itself and also market to the world); and the capacity to build and sustain a system that supported maritime commerce. Building a viable shipping industry allows a nation to compete successfully in world markets and in turn extend its influence. But because maritime commerce is exposed to piracy, a highly specialized naval force has to be funded and equipped to support and defend the nations' sea power. Most importantly, Mahan believed that control of seaborne commerce was critical to winning in war.

For more than 200 years, the United States has depended on the Naval Service -- *the Navy and Marine Corps Team – to promote peace and stability and to defeat adversaries when* necessary. Naval forces are uniquely suited to support the National Security and National Military Strategies by remaining forward in peacetime, ready to provide timely, initial crisis response, and, when called upon, to fight and win.

The vast majority of America's global trade continues to move by sea, and freedom of the seas remains the enduring responsibility of the Naval Service. However, the ultimate objective of our nation's maritime strategy has always been to impact political, military, and economic interests ashore -- where the U.S. interests predominantly lie.

The 1992 the Navy-Marine Corps vision…*From the Sea* steered us from the blue water, war-at-sea focus into the littorals, where most of the world's population resides and where most conflicts occur. Two years later, the strategic concept *Forward...From the Sea,* refined this course by articulating the naval contributions to national security, which are made by expeditionary forces present forward and credibly shaped to project power during peace, crisis, and war.

Freedom of the seas will always be a requirement for our maritime nation, but the information age has revealed a second international medium -- *cyberspace* -- equally critical to today's world. Cyberspace provides naval, joint, and combined forces with superior knowledge relative to our opponents to enable

them to act with decisive power. Combat-credible forward presence on the seas and *information dominance* via cyberspace technology will, together, provide the means for effective maritime power projection.

The events of 11 September 2001 tragically illustrated that the promise of peace and security in the new century is fraught with profound dangers. Transnational and regional threats have a more immediate and disproportionate effect on the global community and U.S. national interests. Future enemies will attempt to deny access to critical areas of the world, threaten vital friends and interests overseas, and even try to conduct further attacks against the American homeland. To quote from Naval Power 21: *"To counter that risk, the U.S. Navy must expand its striking power, achieve information dominance, and develop transformational ways of fulfilling our enduring missions of sea control, power projection, strategic deterrence, strategic sealift, and forward presence."*

Expeditionary naval forces, already present forward with sustainable combat power, help shape the global and regional security environment. As sovereign and maneuverable bases, they can be uniquely positioned to project influence and reassure allies and friends, free of the political encumbrances that can limit the access of land-based forces.

The most important contribution of naval forces is their ability to prevent wars -- but like all elements of a military arsenal, they are built to fight and win them. The unique contribution of the Naval Service comes as enabling forces during the critical transition from crisis to conflict. Combat-credible naval expeditionary forces stationed forward, configured to handle the spectrum of contingencies and prepared to operate jointly or with interagency and coalition partners are key to this enabling role.

Additionally, the unprecedented reach and accuracy of our sensors and weapons provide the Naval Service the ability to influence events far inland -- in both peace and war. In the future, that capability will be improved through the refinement of precision strike capabilities, naval fires, ship-to-objective maneuver, and special operations.

The Naval Service exists to project U.S. power and influence from the sea throughout the spectrum of operations in peacetime, crisis, and war. Forward presence and information dominance are the *means* that will guarantee both the capability and the capacity of naval forces to influence, directly and decisively, political events ashore. Concurrent battlespace control, attack, and sustainment are the *ways* we will assure the United States global access in the information age. Ultimately, the combat credibility of U.S. naval forces will guarantee the United States remains the world's preeminent sea power and the achievement of our national *ends* of global and regional stability, deterrence, timely crisis response, and when called upon, warfighting and winning.