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Combined Seapower:
A Shared Vision for Royal Navy-United States Navy Cooperation

Preface

The growing importance of the maritime domain has generated the release in 2014 of significant maritime strategies: the *European Union Maritime Security Strategy*, the United Kingdom's (UK) *National Strategy for Maritime Security*, and the United States Marine Corps' (USMC) *Expeditionary Force 21*. Furthermore in 2015, the United States Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard will release their revision of *Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. Drawing upon these strategies from opposite sides of the Atlantic, this *Combined Seapower* document articulates a vision for deeper cooperation between the Royal Navy (RN) and United States Navy (USN) over the next 15 years.¹ Specifically, this vision describes how the RN and USN will work together to support shared interests for mutual strategic advantage. Nothing in this document precludes either country from taking action that it deems in the best interests of its own national security.

1. Introduction

As international powers with worldwide interests and responsibilities, the prosperity and security of the US and UK are inextricably linked to seapower. In today's globalized economy, where 90 percent of the world's trade travels by sea² and national economies are ever more interconnected and specialized, both the US and UK depend on unhindered access to the sea and the uninterrupted flow of trade for our economic prosperity. This trade freedom underpins our ability to recover from the recent recession.

The UK is an island nation, benefiting from the natural protection afforded by the sea. Similarly, the United States benefits from the natural barriers created by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. However, these natural barriers alone are not sufficient to ensure our security. A credible and capable naval force that can project power and influence across the globe is essential to securing our national interests.

The future maritime environment will be characterized by tensions over rival sovereignty claims, disputes over resources, threats posed by transnational criminal organizations, and the rise of increasingly capable military competitors, challenging US and UK interests. To ensure our security and the security of our allies and partners, freedom of maneuver and the ability to use the oceans will continue to be essential.

Credible seapower is an independently deployable and flexible instrument of national power which enables the US and UK to provide forward effect far from our shores, protecting both

¹ Timeframe for the 2015 RN-USN Staff Talks

² International Chamber of Shipping. *Sustainable Development: IMO World Maritime Day 2013*. N.d. 21 July 2014. <<http://www.ics-shipping.org/docs/default-source/resources/policy-tools/sustainable-development-imo-world-maritime-day-2013.pdf>> Pg. 3.

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economic and security interests. To remain prosperous, secure, and globally influential, the US and UK must continue to invest in seapower capabilities. Capitalizing on long-established relationships and where there is already agreement of purpose, a combined approach is even more powerful.

The RN and USN share a common naval heritage. The two Navies have a history of collaboration dating to the first half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the crucible of war has forged the enduring and deep nature of our relationship. Outside of combat this time-proven partnership of uninterrupted naval cooperation includes combined operations, basing access, high-end joint development programs, and joint exercises. Cooperation between our two Navies, and in particular our nuclear cooperation, stands as one of the most enduring features of the “special relationship” between our two nations. But the importance of continued RN-USN cooperation goes far beyond maintaining a long-standing tradition. The primary reason for even deeper cooperation between our Navies is the strategic and operational advantage the relationship provides to both nations.

Shared national interests provide an opportunity for our two Navies to work together to meet the challenges of a complex geostrategic environment. Maximizing cooperation and interoperability will ensure the RN and USN retain leadership and influence in the maritime domain even in the face of these challenges. Through combined, credible, and forward-deployed seapower, we can better share responsibility in maintaining regional stability in critical areas, providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR), and protecting the free access to the maritime commons on which the global economy depends.

2. Why Seapower Matters in the 21st Century

The sea dominates the world by area and is an essential medium for economic prosperity and strategic influence. The sea can be used as a means to project power and influence, and to deny opponents the ability to do the same.

Importance of the Littoral. Over one-third of the world’s population lives within 100 km (60 miles) of an oceanic coast.³ This figure is reflective of the population growth in coastal mega-cities, driven by economic opportunity. Human activity is also increasing further offshore driven by the demand for resources; this includes fishing and hydrocarbon exploration more than 160 km (100 miles) out to sea. These trends indicate the growing importance of the littoral and its consequently increasing relevance to our Naval Forces.

Seaborne Trade. Global commerce continues to depend on the sea as its primary means of transportation. Countries are specializing economically, a byproduct of globalization, and the volume of sea trade is increasing as a result. Seaborne trade (in terms of volume and distance traveled) grew from approximately 27 thousand billion ton-miles in 1999 to an estimated 48 thousand billion ton-miles in 2013.⁴ Seaborne trade by volume is expected to double between 2010 and 2030.⁵ Our Naval Forces, along with others, ensure the maritime conditions that make this trade possible by exercising freedom of navigation, interrogating suspicious activities (enabled by robust

³ United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration. *Living Ocean*. Earth Science: NASA Oceanography. N.d., 21 July 2014. < <http://science.nasa.gov/earth-science/oceanography/living-ocean/> >

⁴ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. “Review of Maritime Transport 2013.” Pg. 14.

⁵ Lloyd’s Register. *Global Maritime Trends 2030*. 2013.

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Maritime Domain Awareness), and enforcing the rule of law on the high seas and at critical maritime chokepoints.

Proliferation of Seapower Capabilities. In part driven by the trends described above and motivated by their own national interests, emerging powers are investing in seapower capabilities, naval and otherwise, at increasing rates. Development of more capable naval fleets by emerging powers with both regional and global aspirations (combined with investments in anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities) has the potential to disrupt our Naval Forces' abilities to operate throughout the maritime domain. Given these developments, the necessity to maintain maritime freedom of maneuver means credible seapower will continue to be as relevant to the 21st century as it was to the 20th century.

Flexibility of Seapower. Representing the sum of a nation's civil and military capabilities to secure its interests on and from the ocean, seapower is an inherently flexible instrument of national power that can be used across the spectrum from peacetime to warfighting activities. Credible seapower can be used to reassure allies through forward presence; build partnerships through security, economic, and diplomatic cooperation; and deter threats⁶ through the capability to respond rapidly with credible and overwhelming force. The oceans host our most survivable and credible nuclear deterrent forces, underpinning both our national and NATO strategic security policies. Should the use of force become necessary, the strategic advantages afforded by our Navies will play a critical role in winning our nations' wars in concert with the other branches of our armed forces.

Application of Seapower. Navies represent the armed element of seapower. A credible naval force is able to perform functions of deterrence, sea control, power projection and influence, and maritime security. The basis of our Naval Forces' deterrent value is in the combination of strategic nuclear and conventional forces (including ballistic missile defense capable ships and other high-end warfare capabilities), and the ability to respond rapidly and credibly against any aggressor. Through sea control, navies underwrite freedom of action to use an area of the sea for a period of time and, if necessary, deny its use to an opponent.⁷ Naval power-projection and influence is the use of force or effects from the sea to accomplish military objectives both at sea and ashore. Navies provide operational flexibility by taking advantage of the unique access provided by the maritime domain. Finally, navies carry out maritime security, a wide range of operations and activities which protect sovereign rights and resources; ensure free and open commerce; and counter maritime-related terrorism, transnational crime, piracy, environmental destruction, and illegal seaborne immigration.⁸ Expertise developed in the conduct of these functions forms the basis for capacity building with partner nations and international defense engagement, which furthers the ability of the USN and RN to influence events in support of our national interests.

Strategic Advantage of Naval Forces. Naval forces enable the US and the UK to use the world's oceans as a medium of maneuver for projecting military power ashore and defending our interests around the world. The UK and the US design our militaries to cross broad expanses of ocean and conduct sustained, large-scale, joint military operations upon arrival. The unique ability to

⁶ Threats include State, non-state and maritime crime (including piracy).

⁷ United Kingdom Ministry of Defence. Development, Concepts, and Doctrine Centre. *Joint Doctrine Publication 0-10: British Maritime Doctrine*. Shrivenham, Swindon, Wiltshire: August 2011. Pg. 2-10

⁸ United States. *Naval Operations Concept 2010*. Pg. 98.

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use the world's oceans in this manner is so ubiquitous and longstanding that it can be easy to take for granted, even as both the US and UK national strategies depend upon a credible naval force.

3. Shared Interests and Common Missions

Mutual strategic interests in the maritime domain continue to provide considerable opportunity for RN-USN cooperation. A comparison of US and UK national interests and values (depicted in Table 1) shows that although each country conceives of its national objectives in its own distinct way, we have much in common. Greater operational integration allows us to more effectively distribute our efforts towards achieving shared objectives to shape a stable world, even in the face of external challenges and internal constraints.

Table 1: US and UK Security Interests and Values

US National Security Interests: ⁹	UK National Security Values and Tasks: ¹⁰
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The security of the United States, its citizens, and US allies and partners• A strong, innovative, and growing US economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity• Respect for universal values at home and around the world• An international order advanced by US leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protection of our people – including their rights and liberties – as well as protecting our democratic institutions and traditions• Strong security and intelligence agencies• Enforce domestic law and strengthen international norms to help tackle those who threaten the UK and our interests• Protect the UK and our interests at home, at our border, and internationally, in order to address physical and electronic threats from state and non-state sources• Help resolve conflicts and contribute to stability. Where necessary, intervene overseas, including the legal use of coercive force in support of the UK's vital interests, and to protect our overseas territories and people• Provide resilience for the UK by being prepared for all kinds of emergencies, able to recover from shocks and to maintain essential services• Work in alliances and partnership wherever possible to generate stronger responses

These national objectives are supported by all instruments of national power. Our respective nations' armed forces have received specific taskings to support these national objectives which are quite similar, as depicted in Table 2. Forward naval presence and credible combat power support accomplishment of these missions. This similarity in shared national values and how our respective

⁹ United States. *National Security Strategy*. May 2010. Pg. 7.

¹⁰ United Kingdom. *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy*. October 2010. Pg. 33.

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armed forces are asked to support those values provides ample opportunity for our Navies' joint pursuit of our common objectives.

Table 2: US and UK Military Missions/Tasks

US Armed Forces Missions: ¹¹	UK Military Tasks: ¹²
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Counter Terrorism and Irregular Warfare• Deter and Defeat Aggression• Project Power Despite Anti-Access/Area Denial Challenges• Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction• Operate Effectively in Cyberspace and Space• Maintain a Safe, Secure, and Effective Nuclear Deterrent• Defend the Homeland and Provide Support to Civil Authorities• Provide a Stabilizing Presence• Conduct Stability and Counterinsurgency Operations• Conduct Humanitarian, Disaster Relief and Other Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Defending the UK and its Overseas Territories• Providing strategic intelligence• Providing nuclear deterrence• Supporting civil emergency organizations in times of crisis• Defending our interests by projecting power strategically and through expeditionary interventions• Providing a defence contribution to UK influence• Providing security for stabilization

4. A Shared Perspective on the Future Strategic Environment

The first step to pursuing our common objectives is validating a common perspective on the likely future strategic environment in which we will operate over the next 15 years. An understanding of this future operating environment will help us to identify the ways in which we will need to evolve our partnership. The following assessments are drawn from studies conducted independently by the US and UK governments.

Increasing Demand for Naval Forces. The RN and USN must continue to prepare for the full spectrum of naval operations. In the face of continuing global instability, naval forces provide our nations' leaders a range of mobile, agile, flexible, and scalable options for projecting military power to protect our national interests. Our Navies should be prepared to be called on in the pursuit of national interests, including in peacetime shaping operations.

Climate Change and Natural Resource Competition. Environmental conditions, such as rising sea levels and more frequent, extensive, and longer lasting coastal flooding,¹³ may lead to

¹¹ United States Department of Defense. *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*. January 2012. Department of Defense, and as referenced in Quadrennial Defense Review 2014, March 2014.

¹² United Kingdom. *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review*. October 2010.

¹³ United States Department of Commerce. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "Global Sea Level Rise Scenarios for the United States National Climate Assessment." NOAA Technical Report OAR CPO-1. December 2012.

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greater instability, and increase the demand for military HA/DR. These environmental changes, coupled with the demands of a growing global population could contribute to competition for food and water, exacerbating existing political and security tensions.¹⁴ In the Arctic a reduction of sea ice will gradually open up previously impassable northern sea routes to surface vessels and new areas for resource extraction,¹⁵ changing the geopolitical importance of the region. For example, along with growing economic opportunities in the Arctic will come risks in competition, environmental concerns, and increased demand for search and rescue capabilities.

Technology Proliferation. The rapid development and spread of advanced kinetic and surveillance technologies¹⁶ will challenge the ability of RN and USN forces to operate in littoral areas. The assured access that we have long taken for granted will be increasingly challenged. Proliferation to both state and non-state actors of A2/AD capabilities, including precision guided weapons, will threaten our ability to project power from the sea and present challenges to sea control.

Emergence of Regional Navies. Emerging economic powers recognize the value of seapower. Several of these countries have made significant investments to improve and expand their maritime capabilities. The emergence of these more advanced navies produces opportunities for cooperation on common maritime security challenges, but also creates the conditions for potential competition.

Growing Influence of Cyberwarfare. State and non-state actors will increasingly challenge previously unfettered access to cyberspace, threatening the assured command and control needed for our critical networks and freedom of operation. Our increasing reliance on space-based technologies for information, communications, and critical infrastructure represents key vulnerabilities which, if not adequately protected, adversaries (including terrorists and criminals) can exploit or disrupt. Cyber weapons also have the potential to disable or physically damage forces and infrastructure. Given these technological challenges we can no longer assume that we will hold the information "high ground." Hence, cyber security and other capabilities in this domain should continue to be a high priority within the context of any shared strategy.

Pressure on Defense Spending. Defense spending will be under constant pressure in relation to other national priorities over the long term, creating uncertainty over future budgets. RN and USN capabilities must be scalable and flexible and represent value for money. In the current fiscal climate, ship inventories will continue to face pressure as they recapitalize under constrained budgets. To maintain core warfighting capabilities, both navies have invested in technologically advanced combatants, making the ships of today more capable than their predecessors, but also increasing the relative strategic value invested in each ship. A ship can still only be in one place at any given time and a smaller force creates its own set of challenges which will have to be managed. Coordinated forward presence will help us to mitigate these challenges and strengthen our strategic partnership.

¹⁴ United Kingdom Ministry of Defence. Strategic Trends Programme, *Global Strategic Trends – Out to 2045*. Fifth Edition, June 2014, p. 29.

¹⁵ United States Navy. *US Navy Arctic Roadmap, 2014-2030*. Navy Task Force Climate Change, February 2014.

¹⁶ United Kingdom Ministry of Defence. Strategic Trends Programme, *Global Strategic Trends – Out to 2045*. Fifth Edition, June 2014, p. 59 and 95.

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Maximizing cooperation between our Navies will help the RN and USN to retain leadership and influence in the maritime domain in the face of a complex and challenging strategic environment.

5. Shared Vision

Our vision for the 21st century RN-USN relationship is an enduring association featuring modern capabilities and maximizing cooperation and collaboration to remain leaders in the maritime domain. Our combined command and control efforts at multiple levels, including the successful First Combined Destroyer Squadron, are substantive examples of our ability to integrate our operations. The future RN-USN partnership will be characterized by the following features:

Interoperability and Mutual Technology Investment. Retaining our strategic advantage will require the continued pursuit of innovative solutions and advanced technologies. A new era of interoperability has already begun. For example, modern capabilities that will support our efforts already include strategic programs such as Carrier Enabled Power Projection and our next generation SSBN Common Missile Compartment (CMC). Through joint development of the CMC for the RN and USN's next ballistic missile submarine classes and the common airframe of the Joint Strike Fighter, interoperability is established at the outset.

Combined Carrier Operations. The return of a UK carrier strike capability creates opportunities for combined US-UK carrier operations and the integration of the UK carrier contribution to wider global coalition operations. "Continuous Carrier Capability" is fast becoming a UK reality with the decision to run HMS PRINCE OF WALES alongside HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH. Future carrier interoperability, underpinned by the US-UK Statement of Intent,¹⁷ and the potential for integrated USMC and Royal Air Force/Royal Navy fixed wing forces, will provide flexible options for mission execution, including credible power projection across the littoral.

Force and Capability Planning. The above actions are examples of a broader effort to align our investments¹⁸ to ensure that our Navies maintain a balanced mix of capabilities and that our activities complement one another's mutual priorities. This investment coordination will include leveraging each other's research and development as appropriate, and the pursuit of compatible weapon systems and sensors to improve interoperability. In particular, we must develop the necessary capabilities and operational concepts to operate together in A2/AD environments.

Officer Exchanges. We will pursue deeper collaboration at multiple levels. This will be achieved by seeking opportunities for more regular and frequent interactions, such as those provided by robust officer exchange programs. The relationships developed in these day-to-day interactions are the foundation that enables joint operations in times of crisis. Current headquarters exchanges, long-lead specialist training for niche or perishable skill sets, and shared operational experience continue to add exponentially to these ends.

¹⁷ Statement of Intent regarding Enhanced Cooperation on Carrier Operations and Maritime Power Projection. Signed by the Secretary of State for Defence (UK) and the Secretary of Defense (US), January 2012.

¹⁸ United States Department of Defense. *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*. March 2014.

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Collaborative Force Management. We will also explore collaborative force management, coordinating global engagement where possible. Sharing of engagement plans and priorities will enable alignment of security cooperation activities and partner capacity building efforts, reducing duplication of effort and allowing us to collectively engage more partners over time. This will allow us to maximize the limited resources available and leverage each other's comparative advantages. For example, varying routes during transits between operating areas and coordinating engagements with partners along the transit enhances our ability to reassure and build partner capacity in priority areas. This collaborative approach will be made possible by increasing our mutual operational and tactical proficiency. We will pursue bi-lateral/multi-lateral training opportunities between US and UK maritime forces to further enhance interoperability.

Our shared vision describes the core components of the RN-USN relationship moving forward. RN and USN cooperation will necessarily be a global endeavor due to the nature of seapower and our countries' strategic interests. A more innovative and combined approach to operations, building on our complementary strengths, relationships, and global presence is the way in which the RN and USN will meet future challenges in an era of constrained resources. We will tailor our efforts in various parts of the world based on potential threats, desired effect, and the utility of RN-USN cooperation within that area, as we already have begun to do in the Asia-Pacific region. This cooperation will be supported by both Navies' domestic and overseas infrastructure and logistics capabilities. In all regions we will seek to reassure our allies and partners. The advantages of overseas operations include resolving conflicts close to the source of the issue, well before they reach our nations' shores. A regular and ready naval presence provides national leaders offshore options to deter, influence, and win in an era of uncertainty.

6. Implementation

Achievement of the vision described above requires an action plan. The RN and USN conduct formal Staff Talks every two years at which specific Lines of Effort (LOEs) are identified. See Annex A for a list of current LOEs. These LOEs guide the main cooperative efforts of the USN-RN functionally and support the shared vision and common interests outlined above. LOEs are designed to be achievable and should be expected to evolve over time as specific challenges in USN-RN cooperation are resolved and new functional areas for improvement are identified. Within each LOE are short- to medium-term tasks that the Navy Staffs review on an annual basis. A classified annex will be developed, as appropriate, to guide staffing efforts in line with this vision and describe in greater detail the actions associated with these LOEs.

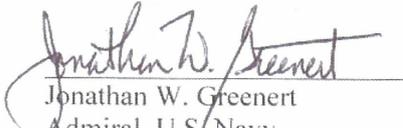
7. Conclusion

As global leaders with worldwide interests, both the US and UK require the ability to project power and influence around the world; full-spectrum seapower delivers this ability efficiently and flexibly. Credible navies provide options to decision makers in the pursuit of national objectives. The shared ideals between the US and UK and the interoperability between our two Navies make it possible to combine efforts in the pursuit of our common national interests.

The RN and USN have a long and unique history of operating together in times of both peace and war. In recent years we have made exceptional progress towards greater collaboration in areas such as weapons system development and information sharing. But, we can do more. Continued fiscal pressure demands that we expand the range of our cooperation and deepen our partnership.

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This strategic approach, supported by regular reviews of our cooperative efforts, will advance the RN-USN partnership, ensuring that we remain leaders in the maritime domain. We are also confident that a strengthened RN-USN relationship will serve as a model for deepening our cooperation with other allies.


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