

SEA POWER FOR A NEW ERA

Even as fresh copies of this year's *Sea Power for a New Era* roll off the printer, the Navy it describes will change. By the time you sit down to read it, we will have learned new lessons on the battlefield, discovered new ways to attack an old shipboard problem, or simply made a new friend and partner somewhere in the world. We will have matured.

Things are changing fast. The Israeli-Lebanon conflict last summer came without a hint of warning and lasted little more than a month. North Korea went from a nation who threatened nuclear testing to one which actually conducted nuclear testing in nearly the blink of an eye. And terrorists in Iraq can design new improvised explosive devices on the backs of napkins over a cup of coffee.

This pace of change—the speed of war—dictates, perhaps more than anything else, the security environment in which we operate. But staying ahead of change is difficult, always has been. As Yogi Berra once quipped, “It’s tough to make predictions, especially about the future.”

Our people understand this unpredictability and are responding in superb fashion. More than 60,000 are deployed as I write this, some 13,000 of them on the ground in combat and combat support roles throughout the Central Command Area of Responsibility. They are taking on new and not-so-new missions all over the world, from providing security at detention facilities to riverine patrol to conventional presence and deterrence operations. Supported at home by extraordinary families, our Sailors and Navy civilians are stepping up as never before to their responsibilities as warfighters and ambassadors.

They know how challenging the times really are. They know that while we continue to fight the war on terror, we must also contend with traditional threats from regional powers who possess robust conventional and, in some cases, nuclear capabilities.

The freedom to conduct naval operations in support of joint, allied and coalition operations—assuring access and projecting persistent combat power—must be preserved through enduring, warfighting competencies. We are and will remain a warfighting, seagoing service and a vital element of our nation’s “Strategic Reserve.”

As the President made clear in his *National Security Strategy*: “There was a time when two oceans seemed to provide protection from problems in other lands, leaving America to lead by example alone. That time has long passed. America cannot know peace, security and prosperity by retreating from the world. America must lead by deed as well as by example.

That is where this guide, *Sea Power for a New Era*, comes in. By carefully explaining the platforms, systems and technology we possess, as well as the organizational constructs we apply for joint and combined operations, this guide forms a blueprint of sorts for pacing change and leading by example.

Yogi Berra was right. We cannot predict the future. But we can and we must be ready for it. Turn the page. Read and share this guide. Use it to better understand your Navy and help us all prepare for an uncertain future.



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