



RETHINKING U.S. NAVY PARTNERSHIPS

January 2017



OVERVIEW

Between August 15 and August 22, 2016, Wikistrat ran an online simulation to identify existing and prospective partnerships for the U.S. Navy (USN), outline the main challenges in achieving success in those partnerships, propose solutions for overcoming those challenges, and red-team the proposed solutions.

Participating analysts were divided into two groups:

α Group Alpha: 17 analysts role-played the U.S. Navy

β Group Bravo: 20 analysts role-played prospective partners



Each of the groups progressed simultaneously through four rounds, building out a framework based upon problem-solving methodology.

1. Potential Partner Identification
2. Proposing Solutions to Noted Obstacles
3. Solution Red-Teaming
4. Strategic Takeaways

ROLE-PLAYING SIMULATIONS

In role-playing simulations, Wikistrat assigns participants specific roles in a multi-stage wargame or complex decision-making exercise. Analysts act as a particular entity for the duration of the exercise.



Simulations run on Wikistrat's online platform, allowing real-time collaboration.



Analysts can participate on their own time from wherever they are.



Every simulation involves a diverse crowd of subject-matter experts.

Types of [Role-Playing Simulations](#)

Wikistrat offers three types of role-playing simulations:

1. Analysts are assigned the role of different actors who explore actions that could be taken in fictional situations.
2. Participants are divided into teams in which they role-play the same actor, to see if they will pursue similar or diverging strategies.
3. A simulation can be a combination of the two.



Concluded Simulation: Rethinking U.S. Navy Partnerships

This Wikistrat simulation ran from August 15 to August 22 and was exclusively available to pre-invited analysts.



Background

Background to the simulation and instructions for analysts.



Analytic Team

List of analysts participating in this simulation.



FAQ

Answers to frequently asked questions.

Q&A Forum

A place to ask questions and interact with other players.



ANALYTIC TEAM HIGHLIGHTS

Featured analysts from the simulation (representative of the 37 participating analysts and experts)

α Group Alpha: U.S. Navy



Dr. Phyllis Mihalas

Former Senior Advisor to the Maritime Civil Affairs and Security Training Command (MCAST)



William Combes

Expert on U.S. naval strategy; former Branch Head of OPNAV N513; has over two decades of naval experience



Captain (ret.) Scott Stanley

Former U.S. Navy Captain and Geospatial Intelligence Division Chief for the Joint Analysis Center at U.S. European Command



Clarence Bouchat

Former Instructor at the U.S. Army War College and Senior Researcher at the U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute



Lt. General (ret.) Rich Natonski

Former Commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command

β

Group Bravo: Prospective Partners



Brig. (ret) Arun Sahgal

Joint Director of Net Assessment, Technology and Simulation at the Institute of National Security Studies in New Delhi



Air Vice Marshal (ret.) Steve Chisnall

Retired Air Vice-Marshal with the Royal Air Force and former Deputy Director for Defence Policy at the British Ministry of Defence



Anm Muniruzzaman

Former Military Secretary to the President of Bangladesh; current President of Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies



Dr. Jack McCaffrie

Former Director General of Navy Strategy and Management in the Royal Australian Navy

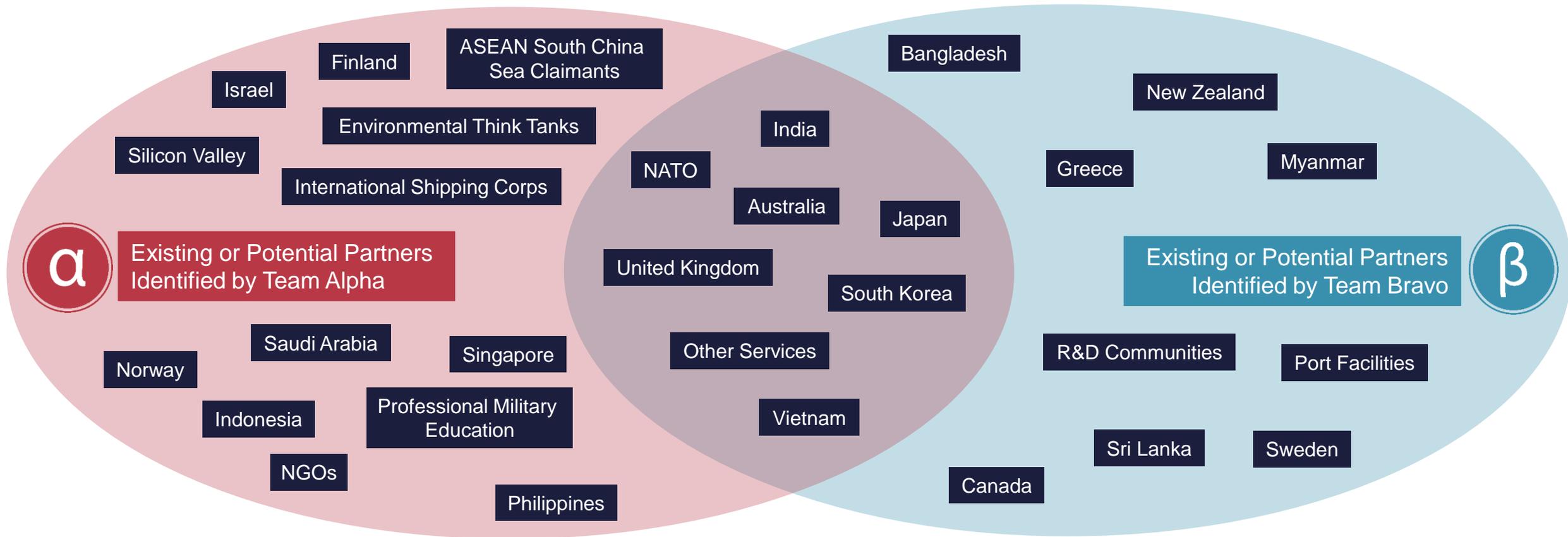


Taxiarchis Sardellis

Former Director of International Relations at the Hellenic Ministry of National Defence

INTERSECTION OF INTERESTS

The two teams independently identified a series of **potential or existing partners**:



KEY FINDINGS

Where to Invest

Navy partnerships in Asia will be more important than ever and the U.S. Department of Defense needs to invest much more in developing those (with the possible exception of Japan). In contrast, Navy partnerships in much of the rest of the world are declining in relative value, with the exception of the partnership with the U.K. and Canada.

Rising China, Resurgent Russia

The rising tensions with China in the South China Sea and Russian military resurgence appeared to be the key issues driving the analysis, implying that any “rethinking” will need to be done in the context of pressing geopolitical issues and potential major conflict. **The South China Sea theater is the location where the USN needs to have the most flexibility, maneuverability and reliable allies – and presents a key opportunity.**

ASEAN South China Sea Claimants

The relationship between the USN and ASEAN South China Sea claimants received the most attention, adding additional credence to the idea that China is the key issue to manage in pursuing partnerships for the USN.

Navy-to-Navy Cooperation

Analysts did not invest analytic energy into further exploring private partnerships. Rather, the exercise was starkly state-centric and focused on cooperation with other navies. Importantly, it was repeatedly raised that a partner needs to provide value above and beyond the simple fulfillment of a requirement.

Working With What's Available

Analysts consistently noted that the interests of existing or prospective USN partners may be at odds with each other – and that the interests of partners can change. The USN faces many external challenges that temper its ability to fully appreciate current or potential partners’ insights and experience.

PROPOSALS FOR NEW AND ENHANCED PARTNERSHIPS

Potential and existing partnerships (or partnership types) were selected for further inquiry. Analysts generated solutions regarding overcoming partnership obstacles.

ASEAN SOUTH CHINA SEA CLAIMANTS



A COALITION OF THE AFFLICTED

COUNTERMEASURES TO DETER CHINESE AGGRESSION

DETERRENT STRATEGIES FOR CHINA

MARITIME COOPERATION

BASING AGREEMENTS

SHARED "NAVAL VISION"

VIETNAM



ENHANCE VIETNAMESE DEEP WATER CAPABILITIES

LITTORAL EXERCISES/TRAINING

SLOWLY RAMP UP WEAPONS SALES

U.S.-VIETNAM DEFENSE AGREEMENT

INDIA



DEVELOP A "SHARED NAVAL VISION" BETWEEN THE U.S. AND INDIAN NAVY

JAPAN



PERSISTENCE, SUPPORT AND SENSITIVITY

TRAINING AND EXERCISES WITH JAPANESE AMPHIBIOUS FORCES

AUSTRALIA



INCREASE THE POSITIONING OF THE U.S. NAVY IN AUSTRALIAN NORTHERN TERRITORY BASES

WORK WITHIN EXISTING GEOPOLITICAL AND BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS

PROPOSALS FOR RETHINKING EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS

UNITED KINGDOM



ENSURE VIABILITY AND EXECUTION OF "SHARED VISION"

LOBBY TO PROTECT THE TRIDENT

CANADA



JOINT MILITARY INVESTMENT

SPECIAL FOCUS ON COASTAL SECURITY AND THE ARCTIC

ISRAEL



U.S. NAVY-ISRAEL PARTNERSHIP

U.S.-ISRAELI WORKING GROUP TO FIND AREAS OF MUTUAL BENEFIT

OUTSIDE-THE-BOX NON-STATE ACTORS



SILICON VALLEY

R&D COMMUNITIES

INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING COMPANIES

PORT FACILITIES

ENVIRONMENTAL THINK TANKS

PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION



ASEAN SOUTH CHINA SEA CLAIMANTS

OBSTACLES

- Distrust among these potential partners due to overlapping claims in the South China Sea (despite a common challenger in China)
- Regional countries lacking nuclear submarines, carrier operations, credible force-projection missions or platforms, worldwide commitments, or a host of other missions and capabilities
- Varied national origin of equipment (with the Vietnamese People's Navy of all Russian origin); frequent reliance on foreign training and doctrine (Russian/Soviet for Vietnam, British for Malaysia)



IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. NAVY

The South China Sea theater is the location where the USN needs to have the most flexibility, maneuverability and reliable allies.

The United States, and the U.S. Navy in particular, must ensure that its allies are capable of defending their legitimate interests and are able to partner with the United States in a credible way to augment their own efforts.

ASEAN does not have a real security or defense aspect to it yet, and SEATO is no longer functioning. Thus, building a “coalition for maritime security” with a shared maritime vision is a means by which the USN might be able to interact with these states together in order to gain the advantages that such synergy might produce.

Collaboration with a subset of ASEAN South China Sea claimants may be more feasible than working towards full cooperation between all.

Furthermore, the USN needs to find areas where there is overlap or the regional partners have a specialty to add to a partnership.



VIETNAM

OBSTACLES

- Relative weakness of Vietnamese Navy (VPN) compared to navies of U.S. or China
- Vietnam's tightrope walk between the U.S. and China
- Vietnamese ability to offset China resting on larger U.S.-led partnerships across the region
- Instinctive distrust of U.S. held by significant element of Vietnam's leaders
- Soviet/Russian origin of all VPN combat systems
- VPN doctrine's Soviet origin

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. NAVY

The geographical location of Vietnam and Hanoi's strong will to protect its interests in the South China Sea make **Vietnam a critical partner for the U.S. Navy** over the next fifty years.

The Vietnamese Navy is comparatively young and small in size. If a relationship is built up now, the U.S. Navy will be in a position to influence both its material make-up and training.

ANALYST INSIGHTS

The South China Sea arbitration verdict and Chinese assertiveness will place Vietnam in a dilemma in terms of ability to protect its interests in the South China Sea. The USN will need to give some limited assurances despite deep-seated historical wounds.

Brig. (ret) Arun Sahgal

Joint Director of Net Assessment, Technology and Simulation,
Institute of National Security Studies



Analysts noted that it may be more prudent and easier for the U.S. Navy to develop partnerships with all of the ASEAN nations under a common umbrella and framework rather than each individual country.



INDIA

OBSTACLES

- India's overall neutral stance and non-aggressive posture
- India's financial struggles
- Disconnect between the political and military leadership in India
- Indian reliance upon Russia for most critical facets of shipbuilding and armament
- Indian reluctance to irritate China

ANALYST INSIGHTS

Whereas maintenance difficulties and procurement issues are indeed obstacles to a fruitful partnership in times of war, India today is unlikely to enter into any type of overt military alliance with any navy. However, it can undoubtedly play a reasonable role in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in the Indian Ocean region.

Dr. Sanatan Kulshrestha
Wikistrat Senior Analyst



IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. NAVY

While cooperation between the United States and India has significantly grown in recent years, **India remains committed to an autonomous foreign and defense policy and may be a difficult partner in the event of a diplomatic crisis of conflict.**

Successful engagement continues to revolve around the internationally coordinated participation of the Indian Navy in international waters to ensure the maritime security of the Indian Ocean and its periphery.

Common communications, procedures and policies to facilitate the routine conduct of joint patrols, shared maritime intelligence and increasingly complex operations with India remain unlikely to materialize in the next five to ten years.



JAPAN

OBSTACLES

- Economic stagnation preventing naval improvements and diminishing competitiveness with China
- Japanese strategic interests obscuring the extent it is willing to support the U.S. over the ambitions of China or Russia
- Opposition to large-scale U.S. military presence in Japan, as witnessed by the significant local domestic political opposition to bases on Okinawa
- Main tasks of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force precluding fully operational partnership with the USN

ANALYST INSIGHTS

The exercise quickly turned to the Asia-Pacific region, and in particular the South China Sea. A majority of proposed partners and the discussions surrounding these proposals at least indirectly if not directly referenced the South China Sea and/or China. This has particular relevance for Japan's role in regional maritime security.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. NAVY

A key challenge for the USN will be developing deeper cooperation between its Pacific partners in a way that contributes to the security environment but does not exacerbate the current problems. The U.S.-Japan-Australia relationship should be a key priority.

Japan is a primary U.S. ally in the Pacific region; there is robust cooperation between the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Forces (JMSDF) and the USN. Indeed, the relationship between the U.S. Navy, especially the Seventh Fleet, and the JMSDF is arguably the core U.S. alliance ensuring peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

However, in order for the JMSDF to truly be a genuine strategic partner for the U.S. Navy in the Pacific, the post-World War II agreement on Japanese military forces will need to be reconsidered both internationally and within Japan.



AUSTRALIA

OBSTACLES

- Australia's balancing act between alignment with the U.S. and economic interdependence with China
- Challenges in recruitment, retention and manpower limiting the Royal Australian Navy's growth beyond its middle-power force structure
- Australia's significant distance away from potential conflict zones in the East and South China Seas (despite its role as sanctuary outside the range of much of China's military hardware)

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. NAVY

The big test for the U.S.-led partnership will be managing any future turbulence in the East and South China Seas. Partnerships with Japan and Australia will be key for success in this theater.

Australia could provide an important sanctuary for USN assets if a conflict broke out in the Western Pacific, though Australia's maneuverability as a diplomatic partner in the lead-up to a major confrontation will likely be restricted.

ANALYST INSIGHTS

The security (U.S.) versus trade (China) dynamic is certainly getting attention in Australia at present, not least because of the current focus on the South China Sea disputes.

Dr. James McCaffrie

Former Director General of Navy Strategy and Management in the Royal Australian Navy



The continuing U.S. failure to ratify UNCLOS remains a problem, even though the Obama administration has accepted UNCLOS as customary international law.

James Goldrick

Adjunct Professor, Strategic and Defence Studies Center, Australian National University





UNITED KINGDOM

OBSTACLES

- Brexit-related political tensions with other European countries
- Defense budget cuts as a result of Brexit
- Potential for Brexit to trigger political turbulence in Britain, including Scottish independence
- Unrealistic British perception of its position in the world arena (still sees itself as a global rather than regional power)

ANALYST INSIGHTS

The U.S. Navy's relationship with the Royal Navy should only be reevaluated if we are thinking about reducing our cooperation with them.

William Combes
Naval/Maritime Strategist
Former U.S. Navy Fellow, Oxford University



IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. NAVY

It is important both politically and militarily to maintain the “special relationship” and guarantee that the Royal Navy will have the necessary capabilities to secure the GIUK (Greenland–Iceland–United Kingdom) gap against resurgent Russian submarine activity. This capability includes nuclear deterrence missions in the form of Trident submarines.

This may require political effort at the ministerial, legislative and executive levels to ensure that the U.K. sufficiently maintains its naval budget in order to meet international commitments and stated ambitions – especially in the context of Brexit.

Any reductions in relative Royal Navy capability will necessitate increased USN involvement and activity with respect to NATO.



CANADA

OBSTACLES

- Royal Canadian Navy's (RCN) state of near-disarray in terms of capital construction projects, life-cycle management and general maintenance of its vessels caused by budgetary and political issues

ANALYST INSIGHTS

RCN capability will be limited for the next six or seven years. From about 2022 onward, it should have significant capability to assist the U.S. in maintaining open sea lines of communication and leading task groups.

Prof. Elinor Sloan

Professor of International Relations
Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada



IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. NAVY

Canadian cooperation in the Arctic, Americas, the Rim of the Pacific Exercise, Middle East, NATO and elsewhere is an important contributor to U.S. supremacy.

The RCN and the Canadian Coast Guard need to be integrated in their work with the USN and the U.S. Coast Guard, particularly in the Arctic.





ISRAEL

OBSTACLES

- Backlash from Arab nations
- Non-alignment of many past and present U.S./Israeli interests (including vis-a-vis Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas, 1981 Iraqi reactor raid, West Bank settlements) precluding military cooperation and intelligence sharing
- Conflict between global focus of U.S. and regional focus of Israel

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. NAVY

This partnership has a lower plausibility of occurring than most of the others explored here. If pursued, however, the goal should be for the U.S. Navy to have an Israeli partner that can provide military assets, basing for U.S. ships and aircraft, intelligence data and other benefits.

Israel could also assist U.S. naval operations in the Red Sea.

ANALYST INSIGHTS

Israel has a small but proficient navy with advanced technology, including submarines equipped with cruise missiles, as well as a powerful air force. Recent instability in Turkey, purges of the Turkish military and a possible shift away from Europe towards Russia could result in the end of Turkey as a reliable Western naval partner in the Eastern Mediterranean. Israel could fill that role, which might prove vital in light of Russian military intervention in Syria.

Michael Peck
Defense Writer/Journalist





OUTSIDE-THE-BOX NON-STATE ACTORS

SILICON VALLEY

Silicon Valley can play a role in helping the U.S. Navy develop the following: cybersecurity, network enhancement, unmanned systems, artificial intelligence and basic technological applications and solutions for everyday tasks and duties.

R&D COMMUNITIES

R&D communities can facilitate a constant dialogue between the USN and R&D partners to ensure capability gaps are recognized and solutions are focused. This may require revisiting Defense Department procurement procedures.

INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING COMPANIES

The USN can help U.S. and international shipping companies to strengthen their own security by sharing low-level intelligence regarding threats to shipping routes, assisting with countermeasures, training corporate security in tactics to repel boarders, and engaging in other anti-piracy measures.

PORT FACILITIES

USN vessels and aircraft have dependencies on shore facilities for provisions, fuel, courier services, rest and recuperation, and medical capability. The USN should better leverage these resources when possible.

ENVIRONMENTAL THINK TANKS

Numerous businesses, think tanks and international organizations that forecast environmental trends and investigate water issues can provide critical information important to the future of U.S. Navy operations.

PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

The U.S. Navy should increase attendance in professional military education in order to ensure military strategy continues to be taught and practiced in addition to technical skills.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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