

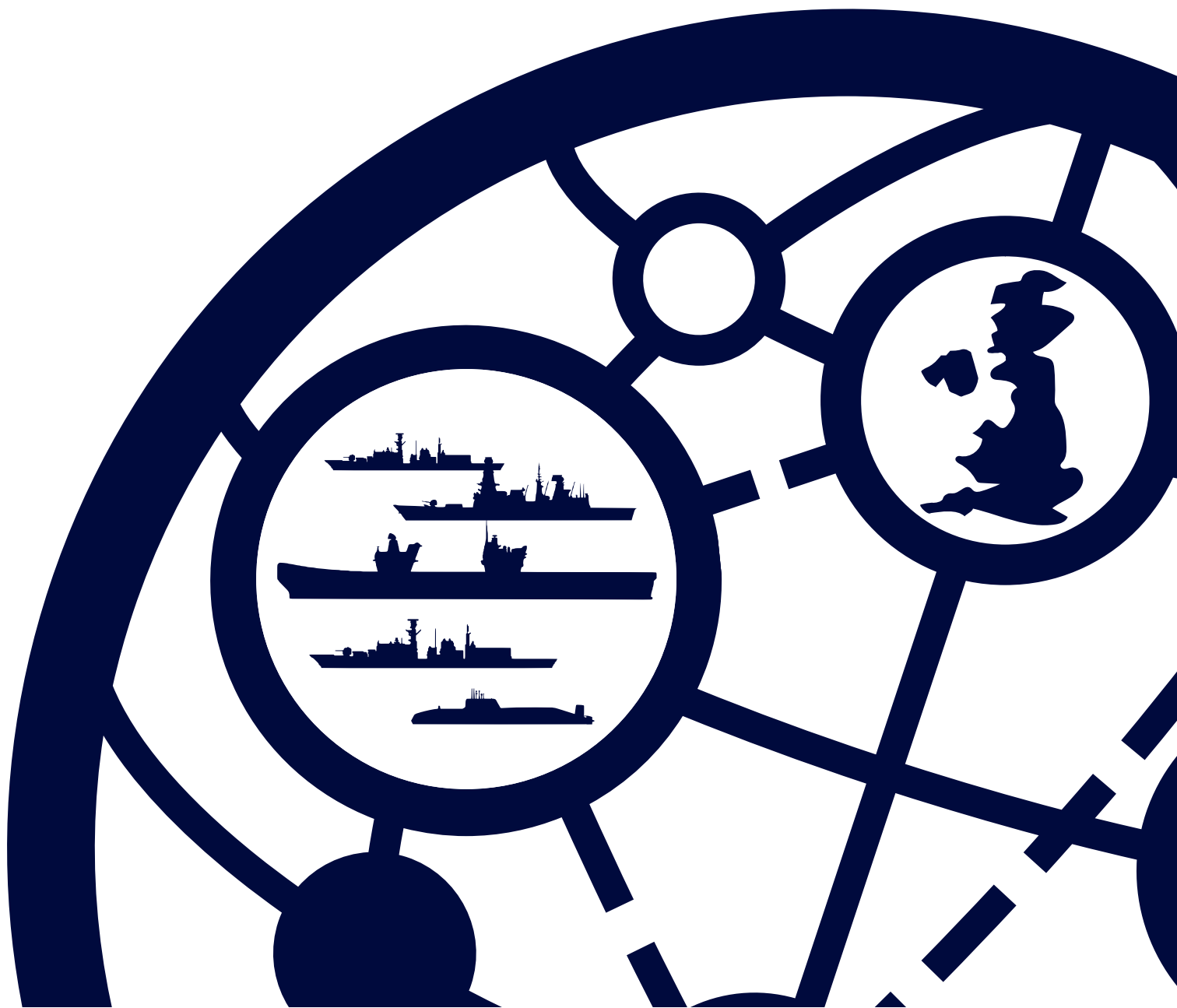
**FIRST SEA LORD'S**

**SEA POWER**

**CONFERENCE 2023**

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Lancaster House & King's College Strand Campus | **16th-17th May 2023**





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# Foreword

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I am delighted to welcome you to my 2023 Sea Power Conference at Lancaster House, hosted by the Royal Navy and the Council on Geostrategy. It forms part of a week of events focusing on the maritime environment. The other events include celebration of the 50th anniversary of the UK-Netherlands Amphibious Force, our strongest and longest lasting amphibious relationship, and an event to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Polaris Sales Agreement (PSA). When it was signed, merely months after the Cuban Missile Crisis and during some of the darkest days of the Cold War, PSA represented a seminal moment in relations between the UK and the USA. I am delighted that both of these relationships, and many others, continue today.

Over the coming two days I look forward to exploring some of the most pressing challenges and opportunities facing those of us with an interest in the maritime domain. Fifteen months on

from Russia's invasion of Ukraine the stark reality is that the world is forever changed. Russia remains an international pariah but persists with its illegal war while others who would seek to challenge the Rules Based International Order are watching very closely.

The Government's Integrated Review Refresh published in March confirmed that the conclusions of the 2021 Integrated Review were right, but that in some areas they needed updating in the light of international events and changes in UK policy. For the Royal Navy, these outcomes confirmed that we must maintain our commitments to NATO and the Euro-Atlantic, while also continuing to look further afield to our partners and allies across the Indo-Pacific as part of the endeavour to put our approach to the region on a long term, strategic footing. But these are not separate endeavours; the intrinsic link between the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific has never been more apparent. London is closer geographically to Beijing than Canberra is, and whilst those whose homes are in the Indo-Pacific feel the impacts of the Chinese Communist Party's divergence from our values far more acutely than we do, events there affect us all. I am therefore delighted to be joined here by a number of my fellow Chiefs of Navy from around the world. This is recognition of the strength of our alliances and our shared desire to defend the Rules Based Order and advocate for free and open use of the great global commons.

As the world changes and challenges to the established order mount, we are also in an age where the rate of change of technology is only increasing. The speed of relevance today is quicker than it was yesterday and slower than it will be tomorrow. From data exploitation to AI and hypersonics, what was once the preserve of science fiction is now part of our core business and continuing to develop exponentially faster. We are unlikely to stop operating ships any time soon, but there are numerous ways in the future that we may do this.

Today and in the future we need to be more aligned across the spectrum of military and civilian maritime sectors. Whilst warfighting is likely to remain broadly the preserve of militaries, the scale and breadth of sub-threshold activity, especially in the maritime domain, reminds us the effects and impacts of war are felt far beyond those on the front line. Working across Government, and with industry and the private sector, we can and must be better informed and better prepared, able to pre-empt nefarious activity and respond when required.

I look forward to our discussions over the next two days as we improve our understanding, reflect on new ideas and develop our thinking as partners and allies drawn from around the world and across the broad maritime community. My intent is that this conference proves to be a productive contribution to charting a way through the many challenges and opportunities we face.

**Admiral Sir Ben Key KCB CBE ADC**

First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff, Royal Navy

# Welcome word

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We are honoured and delighted that the Council on Geostrategy is hosting the First Sea Lord's Sea Power Conference 2023 – the flagship event of the Royal Navy and the key component of the London Sea Power Week 2023.

When we established the Council on Geostrategy in March 2021 with the aim to generate a new generation of geostrategic thinking for a more competitive age, we identified the maritime domain as one of the principal areas of interest for the United Kingdom. This was confirmed in the Integrated Review, Defence Command Paper, AUKUS agreement and the Integrated Review Refresh.

Indeed, we are pleased that our first Policy Paper, which chimed with the Integrated Review, argued that the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific were collapsing into a single geopolitical space – the 'Atlantic-Pacific' – a vast maritime region ripe for systemic competition, which we are only beginning to navigate.

With this in mind, the First Sea Lord's Sea Power Conference 2023 is organised around the theme 'Steel and statecraft: Mobilising naval power in a competitive age'. Over the next two days at the magnificent Lancaster House and King's College London, we will immerse into a series of speeches, conversations and panels to explore and identify how sea power can be leveraged for geostrategic effect in the maritime century.

Beyond convening around 200 senior naval personnel and other key stakeholders, we are also thrilled that this First Sea Lord's Sea Power Conference explicitly aims to nurture maritime talent and skills among younger practitioners with our 'Future Maritime Leaders' Laboratory', developed in close collaboration with Prof. Alessio Patalano at King's College London.

Finally, we would like to express our deep gratitude to the Royal Navy for having faith in us to make this conference a success. We would also like to sincerely thank our partners – all 18 of them – for their important contribution to making this conference possible. We hope you enjoy the biggest Royal Navy's biggest flagship conference to date.

**James Rogers and Viktorija Starych-Samuolienė**  
Co-founders of the Council on Geostrategy

# Steel and statecraft: Mobilising naval power in a competitive age

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The turmoil in the Black Sea, the damaging of telecommunications cables to the Shetland Islands, the destruction of the Nord Stream pipelines, the contestation of Arctic territories and resources, and the militarisation of the South China Sea all showcase the growing relevance of sea power in an increasingly volatile era. Vigorous competition, even confrontation, between the great powers requires a step-change in thinking; the maritime forces of authoritarian states are growing in size and strength.

Moreover, the world has become ever more dependent on physical and digital connectivity – trade routes, undersea cables and pipelines, ports and additional sea-based infrastructure – in the maritime domain to underwrite prosperity. Yet, the sea and the wealth derived from it have become increasingly and alarmingly invisible.

In this context, the theme of the First Sea Lord's Sea Power Conference 2023 is '**Steel and Statecraft: Mobilising naval power in a competitive age**'. The conference seeks to explore prevailing geopolitical issues by engaging in a combination of speeches, panels and conversations in a way which seamlessly incorporates diverse perspectives and backgrounds from the world over.

By informing the strategic thinking of the United Kingdom and its allies and partners, the conference intends to contribute to the art of admiralty and facilitate understanding of the importance of maritime power in an increasingly volatile era.



# Agenda

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## Day 1 | Tuesday 16th May 2023

- 08:30-09:20 Arrival, registration and tea/coffee at Lancaster House
- 08:30-09:20 Private Chiefs' Breakfast
- 09:20-09:25 Welcoming remarks – Viktorija Starych-Samuoliene, Co-founder and Director of Strategy, Council on Geostrategy
- 09:25-09:30 Welcoming remarks – The First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key KCB CBE ADC, Royal Navy
- 09:30-09:50 **Ministerial Keynote speech** by The Rt. Hon. James Cartlidge MP – Minister for Defence Procurement, Ministry of Defence (Sir Henry Leach Lecture)
- 09:50-10:10 **Ministerial Keynote speech** by The Rt. Hon. Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP – Minister of State for Indo-Pacific, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
- 10:15-11:25 **Panel 1:** The art of admiralty: Mobilising national power in a competitive age
- 11:25-12:00 Coffee Break (State Drawing Room)
- 12:00-13:00 **In Conversation:** How connected are the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific theatres?
- 13:00-14:00 Lunch (State Drawing Room)
- 14:00-15:00 **Panel 2:** Competing at sea: Naval power and active deterrence
- 15:00-15:30 Coffee Break (State Drawing Room)
- 15:30-16:30 **Panel 3:** Aligning power: Leading by design
- 16:30-16:45 Departures

### **Dinners (Invitation-only)**

- 18:30-23:00 Official black-tie dinner at Lancaster House
- 18:30-22:00 Side dinner at The Army and Navy Club
- 19:30-22:00 Side dinner at the In and Out Naval and Military Club



# Agenda

## Day 2 | Wednesday 17th May 2023

- 08:45-09:30 Arrival, registration and tea/coffee at Lancaster House
- 09:30-09:50 **Keynote speech** by The First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key, KCB CBE, Royal Navy
- 09:50-11:00 **Panel 4:** Maintaining a competitive edge: Operationalising technology in maritime warfare
- 11:00-11:30 Coffee Break (State Drawing Room)
- 11:30-12:40 **Panel 5:** Steel and statecraft in a maritime century
- 12:45-13:00 **Closing remarks** by The First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key KCB CBE, Royal Navy
- 13:00 Departures

## XV Patrick Blackett at HMS President

NavyX are the Royal Navy's autonomy, technology and lethality accelerator. The team rapidly develop, test and trial cutting edge technologies, with the aim of getting new capabilities off the drawing board and to the front line at pace. Increased speed of learning will be achieved by combining the diverse experience of the NavyX team, industry and academia. NavyX can leverage both XV Patrick Blackett, and BattleLab to test, trial and iterate capabilities of interest.

XV Patrick Blackett will be docked at HMS President on the Thames for London Sea Power Week. XV Patrick Blackett is the only ship of its class in operation with the Royal Navy. Originally designed as an offshore crew vessel, it has since been reconfigured and repurposed for use as the Royal Navy's Test and Experimentation platform enabling NavyX to rapidly experiment without needing to place excess demand on the operational fleet. The vessel's namesake, Patrick Blackett, was a renowned scientist who was awarded the Nobel Prize for physics in 1948. To this day he remains the only former officer from any of the Armed Forces to have achieved this honour.



# Keynote speakers

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## **The Rt. Hon. James Cartlidge MP**

### *Minister for Defence Procurement, Ministry of Defence*

James was first elected to Parliament in 2015. Prior to the 2017 General Election, James was Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Housing and Planning. He was also a member of the Public Accounts Commission and sat on the Work and Pensions Select Committee.

After the 2017 General Election, James was appointed as the Parliamentary Private Secretary (PPS) to the Health Minister. At the beginning of 2018, James was promoted to PPS to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Jeremy Hunt, and remained his PPS when Hunt was promoted to Foreign Secretary. Following Boris Johnson becoming Prime Minister in July 2019, James was appointed as PPS to the Secretary of State for Defence. In February 2020, James was appointed as PPS to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

In April 2023, James was appointed a Minister of State in the Ministry of Defence. He was previously Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury from October 2022 to April 2023 and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice between September 2021 and July 2022.

# Keynote speakers

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## **The Rt. Hon. Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP** *Minister for the Indo-Pacific, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office*

Anne-Marie Trevelyan was appointed as a Minister of State in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on 26th October 2022. Anne-Marie was previously Secretary of State for Transport between 6th September 2022 and 25th October 2022. She was Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade from 15th September 2021 to 6th September 2022.

Previously Anne-Marie was the UK International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP26 Presidency between 7th November 2020 and 6th September 2022. She was Minister of State (Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change) at the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy from January 2021 to September 2021.

She was the Secretary of State for International Development from February to September 2020. She was Minister of State for the Armed Forces from 17th December 2019 to 13th February 2020, and Minister for Defence Procurement from 27th July 2019 to 16th December 2019. Anne-Marie was first elected as Member of Parliament (MP) for the Berwick-upon-Tweed constituency at the 2015 general election.

A chartered accountant by trade, Anne-Marie sat on the House of Commons' Public Accounts Committee from July 2015 to May 2017 and December 2018 to July 2019. She has previously served as the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Defence. As an MP, she has campaigned with colleagues for greater autism awareness and has focused on the Armed Forces Covenant.

# Keynote speakers

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## **Admiral Sir Ben Key KCB CBE ADC** *First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff, Royal Navy*

Educated at Bromsgrove School, Ben Key joined the Royal Navy in 1984 as a University Cadet, subsequently graduating in Physics from Royal Holloway, University of London. He qualified as both helicopter aircrew and as a Principal Warfare Officer and as a junior officer saw service around the world in a variety of frigates and destroyers. He has been privileged to command four ships: the mine hunter HMS Sandown, the frigates HMS Iron Duke and HMS Lancaster, and the aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious. Shore appointments have included Resources and Plans in the Ministry of Defence, an advisor to the Iraqi Director Joint Staff in Baghdad, the UK's Permanent Joint Headquarters, and Headquarters Air Command.

He has also served as Principal Staff Officer to the Chief of Defence Staff. From April 2013 to July 2015 he was Flag Officer Sea Training, responsible for recruiting as well as individual and operational training across the Royal Navy. Promoted to Vice Admiral in February 2016, he was the Royal Navy's Fleet Commander from then until March 2019. He then served as the Chief of Joint Operations, prior to his appointment as First Sea Lord in November 2021. He was awarded the US Bronze Star in 2006 for his service in Baghdad, appointed CBE in 2016 and KCB in 2021.

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# Future Maritime Leaders' Laboratory

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The Future Maritime Leaders' Laboratory is led by the Centre for Grand Strategy and hosted at Strand Campus, King's College London. The activity is designed as an interactive seminar to debate the concepts explored throughout the conference. The objectives are twofold: to create a wider intergenerational community of practice and establish and cultivate a close-knit network of young professionals from different forms of expertise working on maritime affairs.

The Laboratory draws upon a central idea. For almost over two centuries, navies have been at the forefront of how states implement key concepts in international relations, particularly the practice of statecraft. They have redefined the geography of diplomacy and the conduct of deterrence. They have also led the way on how to apply technology to secure a strategic edge in peace, or to meet the challenges of securing victory in war.

The Future Maritime Leaders' Laboratory takes advantage of King's College London's expertise and experience in delivering cutting edge education to bring together experts and practitioners. It sets out how and why diplomacy, deterrence, and innovation matter in an age of contestation. The Laboratory interrogates these notions to better understand how the modern manifestation of the most adaptive and complex naval formation, a carrier strike group, can meet their demands.

In particular, the objective of the seminar discussions is to assess whether and to what extent an international carrier strike group, a manifestation of collective action for diplomacy and deterrence, represents a viable and desirable form of innovation. Conversations among the participants will inform part of the proceedings from the conference with the intent to maximise the exposure of their views and showcase possible directions of future research and policy action.

The Laboratory's will include sixty of the next generation of maritime leaders, academics and practitioners. Prof. Alessio Patalano from King's College London will provide a short introductory lecture to set the tone of the proceedings. The lecture will specifically address why and how the idea of testing the desirability of an international carrier strike group will inform the Laboratory's main output.

Small group discussions (in three groups) will follow the lecture. Each group will interrogate through a facilitator-led discussion one theme (diplomacy, deterrence, and innovation) to answer a wider question of how to establish, maintain, and deploy an international carrier strike group. Each group will prepare a short presentation to articulate their specific answer to the set guiding questions.

The Laboratory will investigate three questions:

- How can naval engagement be integrated into national diplomacy?
- What does deterrence at sea mean in an age of competition?
- What does innovation mean for modern navies?

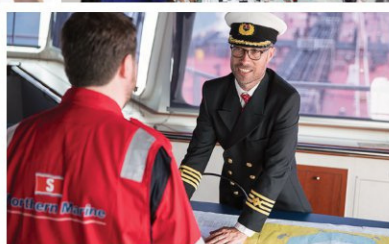
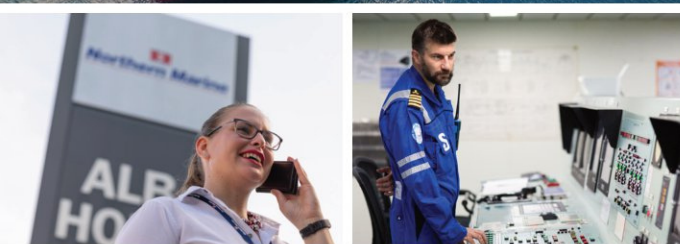
The groups will reconvene into a plenary session in which the core findings of the discussion will inform the final structure and answer to why and how a future international carrier strike group could contribute to international stability. The Laboratory will represent the first opportunity of its kind to have collective work presented and included into the proceedings of a professional conference. This will enable this nascent community to ensure the maximum impact of their collective action.

## Agenda

- 13:30-14:30 Arrival, registration and buffet lunch at King's College London
- 14:30-14:50 Briefing on Diplomacy, Deterrence and Innovation
- 15:00-16:00 Group break-up discussions
- 16:10-17:00 Plenary discussions and group presentations
- 17:00-17:15 Final observations
- 17:15-19:00 Future Maritime Leaders' Laboratory drinks and networking reception at King's College London

*The Future Maritime Leaders' Laboratory is sponsored by Stena.*

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# Panel 1

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## The art of admiralty: Mobilising national power in a competitive age

From the Black Sea to the South China Sea, maritime strength is again being leveraged directly and explicitly for the national interest. Yet, the naval case is far from assured within national debates over security. This panel will explore the need for admiralties to explain how maritime power is central to national objectives, to work with the financial sector and the marine-industrial base to ensure the availability of the resources and infrastructure for maritime projection, and to work with different stakeholders from across government and society to uphold naval strength.



**Vice Admiral (rtd.) Sir Clive Johnstone**  
*Chair, Naval Review*

V. Adm. (rtd.) Sir Clive Johnstone is the Chairman of the Naval Review, the leading maritime journal currently undergoing a very busy transformation to properly represent the maritime voice in the 21st Century. Previously he was a V. Adm. in the Royal Navy and served as Commander of NATO's Allied Maritime Command.





## **Monica Kohli**

*Senior Lawyer, Gard AS (UK) Limited*

Monica Kohli is a senior solicitor specialising in maritime law. For the last 14 years she has been a Senior Lawyer in Gard, the largest of the Protection and Indemnity Clubs, advising ship owners, charterers and traders on legal issues pertaining to shipping and trade worldwide. She is currently President of the Women in Shipping and Trade Association.



## **Prof. Andrew Lambert**

*Laughton Professor of Naval History, King's College London*

Prof. Andrew Lambert FKC is Laughton Professor of Naval History at the Department of War Studies at King's College London. He is a Fellow of King's College and the Royal Historical Society. He received the 2014 Anderson Medal for his book *The Challenge: Britain against America in the Naval War of 1812*.



## **Vice Admiral René Tas**

*Chief of Staff, Royal Netherlands Navy*

V. Adm. René Tas has been in command of the Royal Netherlands Navy since September 2021. Previously, he has been stationed in The Hague as Director in the Policy Department of the Ministry of Defence as Commodore and has been the Head of Strategy and Advice for the Commander of the Royal Netherlands Navy.



## **Jason Wrigley**

*Director of Business Development, Lockheed Martin*

Jason Wrigley is Director, Business Development for Naval Combat and Missile Defence Systems at Lockheed Martin for Integrated Warfare and Sensor Systems. With a concentration on NATO partners, he has worked extensively with Turkey, Canada and the United Kingdom.

# In conversation

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## How connected are the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific theatres?

This conversation will involve three senior naval officers, who will discuss the growing connectivity between the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific theatres as climate change creates new challenges and opportunities, as well as the need to think about them as integrated spaces. In addition, they will look at whether, and how, the effect of NATO in the Euro-Atlantic can be replicated in the Indo-Pacific.



### **Viktorija Starych-Samuolienė**

*Co-founder and Director of Strategy, Council on Geostrategy*

Viktorija Starych-Samuolienė is Co-founder and Director of Strategy at the Council on Geostrategy where she is responsible for the organisation's strategy and growth. Her areas of expertise include Eastern European politics and security and Euro-Atlantic geopolitics. Her previous experience includes research and external affairs roles at the Henry Jackson Society.



## **Admiral Michael M. Gilday**

*Chief of Naval Operations, United States Navy*

Adm. Michael Gilday has served as the 32nd Chief of Naval Operations for the US Navy since August 2019. As a flag officer, he served in joint positions as Director of Operations for NATO's Joint Force Command Lisbon; as Chief of Staff for Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO; Director of Operations, J3, for US Cyber Command; and as director of operations, J3, for the Joint Staff. He recently served as Director for the Joint Staff of the US Navy.



## **Admiral Sir Ben Key KCB CBE ADC**

*First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, Royal Navy*

Adm. Sir Ben Key has served as First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff since November 2021. Previously, he was the Royal Navy's Fleet Commander and served as the Chief of Joint Operations. Since joining the Royal Navy in 1984, he has been privileged to command four ships: the mine hunter HMS Sandown, the frigates HMS Iron Duke and HMS Lancaster, and the aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious.



## **Admiral Pierre Vandier**

*Chief of the Naval Staff, French Navy*

Adm. Pierre Vandier has served as Chief of the Naval Staff for the French Navy since September 2020. Previously, he was Principal Staff Officer of the Secretary of State for Defence. He is an Officer of the French Legion of Honour and of the Maritime Merit.

# Panel 2

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## Competing at sea: Naval power and active deterrence

This panel will focus on the ability of naval power to ‘actively deter’ systemic competitors from attempting to revise the international order. It will focus on the maritime activities of the People’s Republic of China, Russia and Iran, before asking how naval power can be used to actively deter aggressors from establishing their own spheres of influence and challenging the sea lanes, whether in the South and East China seas, the Black and Baltic seas, or the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf. In particular it will look at how different forms of deployment can intersect with one another to uphold the open international order and world trade.



### **Prof. Alessio Patalano**

*Professor of War and Strategy in East Asia, King’s College London*

Prof. Alessio Patalano is Professor of War and Strategy in East Asia at the Department of War Studies, King’s College London, where he specialises in maritime strategy and doctrine, Japanese military history and strategy, East Asian security, and British defence policy towards the Indo-Pacific. He is also an Associate Fellow at the Council on Geostrategy.



## **Rear Admiral Edward Ahlgren OBE**

*Commander Operations, Royal Navy*

R. Adm. Edward Ahlgren OBE is a senior Royal Navy officer currently serving as Commander Operations, the standing commander responsible for the planning and execution of Royal Navy operations globally. Previously, he has served in Cairo, Egypt as the Defence Attaché and in Scotland as the Captain of the Faslane Flotilla.



## **Rear Admiral Ewa Skoog Haslum**

*Chief of Navy, Swedish Navy*

R. Adm. Ewa Skoog Haslum has served as the Chief of the Royal Swedish Navy since January 2020. Previously, she served as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the Swedish Defence University and has commanded the Swedish corvette HSwMS Sundsvall, including deployment to the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon.



## **Dr Nicolas Mazzucchi**

*Research Director, French Navy Centre for Strategic Studies*

Dr Nicolas Mazzucchi is a Research Director at the French Navy Centre for Strategic Studies. His areas of expertise are energy, cyber and naval strategy. Previously, his career alternated positions at the French Ministry of Defence in operations as well as in research roles in major French think tanks.



## **Dr Philip Shetler-Jones**

*Associate Fellow, Council on Geostrategy*

Dr Philip Shetler-Jones is an Associate Fellow at the Council on Geostrategy. For the past three years he has been engaged on the project 'Enhancing Security Cooperation in and with Asia', co-funded by the EU and German Federal Foreign Office.



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# Panel 3

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## Aligning power: Leading by design

This panel will focus on the question of how navies convene, lead, and shape policy implementation, bilaterally or in wider coalition. It will explore how a navy can act as a centre of gravity for national policy to align other countries in support of its interests. It will look at specific recent successful examples of alignment from the United Kingdom and allies and partners, including Japan's maritime vision of a 'free and open Indo-Pacific', as well as the countries Britain and the Royal Navy should be looking to forge deeper connections with in the maritime 21st century.



### **Emma Salisbury**

*Associate Fellow, Council on Geostrategy*

Emma Salisbury is an Associate Fellow at the Council on Geostrategy and a PhD candidate at Birkbeck College, University of London, with research focusing on the military-industrial complex and defence innovation. She is also a senior staffer for a Member of Parliament and an Assistant Editor at *War on the Rocks*.





## **Ian Bowers**

*Associate Professor, Institute for Military Operations, Royal Danish Defence College*

Ian Bowers is an Associate Professor at the Institute for Military Operations, Centre for Joint Operations, Royal Danish Defence College. His research interests include joint operations, deterrence, naval strategy and Asian security.



## **Vice Admiral Martin Connell CBE**

*The Second Sea Lord, Royal Navy*

V. Adm. Martin Connell CBE has served as the Second Sea Lord since January 2022. He is responsible for the delivery of the Royal Navy's future capabilities, strategy and long-term programme and is the Royal Navy's Principal Personnel Officer. He has previously served as the Royal Navy's Force Generation Director, Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm and Senior Responsible Owner of the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carrier programme.



## **Stephen Lillie CMG**

*Director, Defence and International Security*

Stephen Lillie is the Director for Defence and International Security at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Previously, he was British High Commissioner to Cyprus and was the Foreign Office Asia-Pacific Director, advising British policy towards China.



## **Major General Jim Morris CB DSO**

*Standing Joint Force Commander*

Maj. Gen. Jim Morris is Director Joint Warfare in UK Strategic Command. Previously, he was the Head of Future Maritime Capability Development in Navy Command Headquarters. In 2010, he was selected to be the first Military Assistant to the Prime Minister and served in Downing Street until October 2012.

# Panel 4

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## Maintaining a competitive edge: Operationalising technology in maritime warfare

This panel will focus on the technologies contemporary navies require – autonomy and automation, space domain, artificial intelligence, advanced weaponry (including directed-energy weapons) – to uphold their competitive edge in a maritime century. Naval operations conducted in the war against Ukraine, as well as state-sponsored coercive uses of maritime capabilities in the Indo-Pacific, have offered recent examples of how technology and operations intersect to innovate warfare at sea. The panel will also engage with the question of how large authoritarian states may achieve a greater degree of technological symmetry than in the past.



**Shashank Joshi**

*Defence Editor, The Economist*

Shashank Joshi is Defence Editor at the Economist. Previously, he was a Senior Research Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute and a Research Associate at Oxford University's Changing Character of War Programme. He has given evidence to the House of Commons' Foreign Affairs Committee and Defence Committee.



## **Rear Admiral Rune Andersen**

*Chief of the Royal Norwegian Navy*

R. Adm. Rune Andersen earned the rank of Rear Admiral and was appointed as Chief of the Royal Norwegian Navy in 2020. Previously, he served as Fleet Commander of the Royal Norwegian Navy.



## **Dr Richard Drake**

*Chief Technology Officer, Babcock*

Dr Richard Drake is the Chief Technology Officer at Babcock and is responsible for driving Babcock's Innovation and Technology strategy and brings with him extensive industrial experience across defence, aerospace and nuclear.



## **Julie Marionneau**

*Head of International Relations, ADS*

Julie Marionneau is Head of International Relations at ADS (UK Trade Association for Aerospace, Defence, Security and Space). Previously, she was a Major and Legal Advisor in the French Air Force and NATO Commands where she specialised in law of Armed Conflict, Operational law and Air law.



## **Rear Admiral James Parkin CBE**

*Director of Development, Royal Navy*

R. Adm. James Parkin CBE is the Director of Development in the Royal Navy. He has commanded several notable joint operations overseas, including the multinational Baltic Protector deployment to Northern Europe in 2019, and the International Maritime Security Construct in the Middle East in 2020.



## **Julian Pawlak**

*Research Associate, German Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies*

Julian Pawlak is research associate at Helmut Schmidt University/University of the Federal Armed Forces Hamburg and the German Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies, the think tank of the Bundeswehr.

# Panel 5

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## Steel and statecraft in a maritime century

In an age in which physical and digital connectivity – trade routes, undersea cables and pipelines, ports and additional infrastructure – underwrite prosperity, public opinions and perceptions of the role of the sea in society remain uncertain. Such an attitude is often defined as ‘seablindness’. This panel will explore how the relationship between the sea, maritime infrastructure is changing and what a modern national identity could look like in a maritime century. Within this context the discussion will also investigate how the Ukrainian fight for national survival should inform conversations in open societies about the importance of strategic and naval power for geoeconomic success and simultaneously geopolitical confrontation, if not outright war.



### **James Rogers**

*Co-founder and Director of Research, Council on Geostrategy*

James Rogers is Co-founder and Director of Research at the Council on Geostrategy, where he specialises in geopolitics and British strategic policy. Previously, he held research positions at leading think tanks and academic organisations, including the Baltic Defence College and the European Union Institute for Security Studies.



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# Food for thought essays

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## The 'Art of Admiralty'

By Prof. Andrew Lambert

The 'Art of Admiralty', the sustained development and promotion of a coherent, positive and holistic long-term approach to the nation's engagement with the sea, is a cultural concept that extends far beyond any calculus of warships, trade, diplomacy or seafarers. It underpinned the creation and maintenance of the British seapower state. Seapower states combine inclusive political and economic systems under the rule of law, high levels of maritime commercial activity and the necessary naval strength to secure the nation's extended interests, as well as deter aggression towards allies and partners. Seapowers emphasise the maritime in national strategy, with sea dependence shaping force levels. This combination of progressive political systems and maritime power shaped the modern world, and it still frightens closed economies and autocratic empires.[1]

This 'art' is neither new, nor unique to Britain: it can be traced back to ancient Athens, mediaeval Venice, and the Dutch Republic, states which relied on the sea to secure their interests and define their identity. Seapower states use Fleet Reviews and monumental architecture to display strength and assert dominance, powerful signals suitably reinforced by cultural outputs. Having defeated Russia in the Crimean War (1854-1856) a Royal Fleet Review, on St. George's Day 1856, displayed Britain's naval might to an audience that included foreign diplomats. The messaging was not subtle, but it was effective. Having defined the language of global power, Britain preserved peace with Russia, and other major powers, for half a century by assembling a fleet to support diplomacy in every crisis. Long before continuous at-sea deterrence (CASD), the Royal Navy deterred great power rivals, backed British diplomacy, supported allies, and delivered the necessary messaging.

Henry VIII created the Royal Navy to provide strategic security, and an Admiralty to manage it. He understood the visceral power of great warships, displaying images of his fleet on either side of his throne. In 1588 the defeat of the Spanish Armada made naval glory the foundation myth of the English nation, a role taken over by the British success at Trafalgar – celebrated with a universally recognised classical motif of imperial dominion. The famous column, modelled on the Temple of Mars in Rome, made Nelson 'Britannia's God of War', the embodiment of national power. It was all shaped by Admiralty insiders.

This synergy of fleet, strategy, politics, economics and culture was negotiated with the nation: the defence of floating trade securing support from the City of London, which mobilised the political support and economic strength that sustained sea control strategies that prevented any one power from dominating Western Europe, and kept overseas markets open. Protecting merchant ships in troubled regions has a long history. The City preferred a seapower state to absolute rulers and standing armies, backing the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, a pro-navy partnership between Crown and Parliament.

The 'art' worked because it was sustained by the Admiralty, a great department of State, located on Whitehall, at the centre of political power. While admirals commanded fleets and settled strategy, naval messaging was delivered by civil servants, who spent their entire careers inside the organisation. Samuel Pepys, Secretary to the Admiralty, used naval history to explain current policy. His successor, Josiah Burchett, went further. *A Complete History of the Most Remarkable Transactions at Sea (1720)* highlighted the political importance of naval warfare since ancient Athens, while the introduction instructed the new German King on his responsibilities as the ruler of the seas. George I used naval display to block Russian expansion in northern Germany. In peace and war, the Admiralty sustained the message, raising and lowering the level of implied threat to match the emerging situation.

The 'art' also handled more unusual risks. In 1816 John Croker, First Secretary to the Admiralty, bought Nelson's letters to Lady Hamilton, to prevent any hint of scandal from tarnishing the image of the national hero. He kept them hidden for decades. His colleague John Barrow, Second Secretary, crafted biographies of other admirals, to situate current policy choices, explain the 'Mutiny on the Bounty', and promote exploration.

The Admiralty, rather than any individual, was critical to the maintenance and messaging of the seapower state. The abolition of the Admiralty in 1964 coincided with Cold War nuclear anxieties, focused on the divided Germany. Without a home in the revised defence establishment 'Admiralty' messaging faltered, slowly replaced by the debilitating British condition of 'sea blindness'. The Falklands War showed how quickly those messages could be revived, alongside a potent demonstration of why they were needed. Tackling 'sea blindness' remains a national issue, far beyond the reach of academics, think tanks and policy fora. While all navies engage in messaging, the Royal Navy has the advantage of being the Senior Service, but it cannot afford to become a 'Silent Service'.

Ultimately the 'Art of Admiralty', sustaining a seapower identity in times of peace as well as war, might ensure the next crisis did not meet the same unreflective response as the last, that aggression on land must be addressed at the point of contact, by soldiers. There are more than enough troops under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) between the Polish/Ukrainian border and the English Channel for that to be unnecessary. Applying maritime pressure on Russia's exposed coastal flanks would be consistent with the 'British way of war', a subtle, elegant and effective concept that maximises national strengths, and minimises weaknesses.[2] For approximately 300 years Britain restrained Russian aggression by applying pressure at and from the sea, using economic coercion, local offensives and working with local allies.[3] Today, Russia remains vulnerable at sea.

Looking ahead, the 'art' will be essential to British global interests, key alliances and regional alliances and groupings such as NATO and AUKUS. It is not an especially difficult message to frame, but it needs sustained, committed and central direction to ensure it reaches the key audiences. We have much to learn from our predecessors.

[1] Andrew Lambert, *Seapower States: Maritime Culture, Continental Empires and the conflict that made the Modern World* (London: Yale University Press, 2018).

[2] Andrew Lambert, *The British Way of War: Sir Julian Corbett and the Battle for a National Strategy* (London, Yale University Press, 2021).

[3] Alfred T. Mahan, *The Problem of Asia* (London: Sampson Low, 1900).

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# Establishing deterrence in a maritime century

By James Rogers

My sole objective is PEACE...If you rub it in both at home and abroad, that you are ready for instant war with every unit of your strength in the first line, and intend to be first in, and hit your enemy in the belly, and kick him when he is down...then people will keep clear of you.[1]

This is how Adm. Jackie Fisher, then First Sea Lord, justified the reorganisation of the Royal Navy in late 1904. It is an open question as to whether his understanding of deterrence turned out to be correct: despite the British Grand Fleet's strength in 1914, Germany attacked Belgium and France. It is unclear whether this was because the Germans felt naval power, ultimately, would be supplementary to a European war or whether it was due to a failure to signal to the Germans His Majesty's (HM) Government's preparedness to uphold Belgian and French sovereignty.

What is clear is that the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) adopted a very different geostrategic posture after 1945. Unlike in 1914, Britain issued explicit security guarantees to its continental allies through the Dunkirk (1947) and Brussels (1948) treaties; a year later NATO was created with US and Canadian participation. The allies also had access to something they did not in 1914: atomic weapons. Not only could they now 'hit their enemy' more forcefully, but they could also threaten to punish an aggressor with 'instant war' – even total destruction.

Once the Soviets detonated their own atomic bomb in 1949, the allies feared they might disregard NATO security guarantees. Did the Kremlin really believe America and Britain would respond to a Soviet invasion of West Germany, for example, if it meant the devastation of New York City or London? For this reason, the UK and the US had to visibly 'extend' their nuclear systems over weaker European allies. They built large military bases in West Germany – for 50,000 British and 250,000 American troops, as well as their families – to deny the Soviets access to NATO territory. Additional armoured response forces created an interlocking escalatory ladder, which was further compounded in 1952 when Britain detonated its own atomic device. This created a near-perfect system of deterrence, which contained the Soviets and helped cause their collapse.

Today, in the 2020s, the geopolitical environment is very different to early Cold War Europe. With the rise of the Indo-Pacific, it is more extensive and dynamic. It is a broad space connected by sea and focused on the littoral underbelly of Eurasia. As noted in recent Australian, British and Japanese strategic reviews, it is becoming more contested and volatile. While Russia is attempting to invade an entire country on the Black Sea, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has undertaken a massive naval build-up and an island-building spree in the South China Sea, where it has negated the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (which it ratified in 1996) through illegitimate claims over waters surrounding its new islands.



True, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) – the PRC's navy – is still weaker than the combined strength of the US Navy and Royal Navy, which operate 13 carrier strike groups and over 80 nuclear submarines between them. Japan, France, Italy, South Korea and Australia also maintain significant navies of their own, some of which are receiving more investment as their governments seek to counter the dramatic Chinese naval build-up. Equally, the PLAN still has a long way to go to exceed British and American technological wizardry and lacks the array of naval bases, air stations, and logistics facilities the UK and US have built across the Indo-Pacific. The US also has mutual defence alliances with Japan, South Korea and Australia and Congress has legislated to assist Taiwan.

But the situation is changing. The PRC today acts less like the Soviet Union, which was an overextended terrestrial power when the Cold War began in 1949, but more like Germany in the early 20th century – haughty and imperious. With its Belt and Road, Global Security, and Global Development initiatives, the PRC seems bent on global influence propelled through the Indian Ocean and Central Asia and underwritten by a globally postured two-ocean navy. What does this mean? As James Cleverly, the Foreign Secretary, recently remarked: 'If we are left to draw our own conclusions, prudence dictates that we must assume the worst.'

Under these circumstances, maritime democracies ought to be ready to ask some thorny questions. As in the Euro-Atlantic in the late 1940s, proactive measures can be taken to shape the Indo-Pacific, even in an era defined neither by peace nor war but by dynamic confrontation. For example, how can the risk of a 'vacuum war' in the Indo-Pacific be reduced? In 1914 in Belgium, 1937 in China, 1939 in Poland, 2008 in Georgia, and 2014 and 2022 in Ukraine, aggressors tested the will of the custodians of the international order by probing at its weakest points. What does this mean for Taiwan? Likewise, if the maritime balance of power shifts further in the PLAN's favour, might Beijing seize the opportunity to lash out at a solitary foreign offshore patrol vessel or frigate sent to uphold freedom of navigation to deter others from challenging its own claims?

Notwithstanding the recent establishment of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and AUKUS, the answer to these questions may not involve founding an 'Indo-Pacific NATO'. But it should, surely, look at how the maritime democracies can create positive feedback loops to deter opportunism and aggression.

In other words, how can the sophisticated escalatory ladder of the Euro-Atlantic be replicated in (or extended to) the Indo-Pacific? What force posture is required to ensure that forward-deployed naval assets, such as offshore patrol vessels and frigates, can be backed up with naval response forces and strike groups? How will these intersect with one another and with forward-deployed land- and air-based assets, with the maritime forces of allies and like-minded partners, and, ultimately, with the British and American CASD? How will this be signalled to rivals? And what is required to convince them that the deterrence system will instantly activate if they challenge it?

These are questions the custodians of the international order in the Indo-Pacific ought to begin grappling with. With AUKUS, Australia, the UK and the US have begun to provide an answer which will inevitably have to include additional military and non-military elements and more actors. What is certain is that maritime democracies ought to move faster to meet the demands of deterrence in a maritime century. Given their gaps in preparedness for systemic warfare, combined with the power of modern weapons, the risk of failure should be a powerful driver for steadfast action.

[1] Cited in: Shawn T. Grimes, *Strategy and War Planning in the British Navy, 1887-1918* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), p. 60.

[2] James Cleverly, Speech: 'Our position on China', 25/04/2023.

[3] Jakub Grygiel, 'Vacuum Wars', *The American Interest*, 01/07/2009.

# Naval innovation in a maritime century

By Prof. Alessio Patalano and Emma Salisbury

In 2018, James Mattis, then US Defence Secretary, observed that innovation needs to ‘deliver performance at the speed of relevance’ and ‘success no longer goes to the country that develops a new technology first, but rather to the one that better integrates it and adapts its way of fighting’.[1] His words offer a warning to technology-intensive navies intent on mastering technological change to further operational success.

A technology-driven imagined future is fraught with risks since it might not survive the capricious nature of international affairs. The *Ford* class of supercarriers, the *Zumwalt* class of destroyers, the Littoral Combat Ship programme, totems of an imagined fleet of the future from the dominant position of the early 1990s, all struggle to deliver the requisite capabilities for a more contested maritime present. Technology is not, therefore, the analytical focus of the quest of innovation. Rather, it is a dependent variable which has to be reviewed against an attentive analysis of the demands of the strategic context of tomorrow.[2]

What does such a context look like? We live today in a maritime century. The ocean underwrites global physical and digital connectivity, bringing countries closer together and driving economic prosperity. It is also a resource which is reshaping its sustainable management and exploitation. Further, it remains the largest staging platform for the projection of capabilities that empower states, or coalitions, with the choice to extend the use of force for the purpose of statecraft beyond their borders. This maritime century is unlikely to change anytime soon.

Whilst the economic and political significance of the ocean has expanded, its use to advance national objectives through military influence is more diffused and less obvious. On the one hand, the ability to extend the reach, lethality and sustainability of maritime forces already redefined diplomacy and war in the 20th century. Sea control was instrumental in the victory of the maritime alliances of the two world wars, whilst deterrence at sea set the pace of the Cold War. Today, expeditionary operations – from crisis response and disaster relief to counter-piracy – and ‘wars of choice’ have hardly undermined the sea’s value as a means of power projection.

On the other, as the demand for ocean governance increases, so do the opportunities for state actors to exert degrees of influence. The emergence of UNCLOS as the main framework to determine sovereign rights at sea has led to competing claims with some countries resorting to armed coercion to assert ‘rights and interests’. Besides undermining UNCLOS, this form of behaviour risks planting the seeds for revisionist actors such as the PRC, Russia, or North Korea to leverage peacetime claims to enhance sea control in wartime. Artificial military outposts in the South China Sea are not merely markers of a claim, but down payments to assert command of the sea.

Thus, in a maritime century, what does successful innovation look like? First, naval innovation should assist the demands of a contested peace. Fleets will operate more, for longer times, across a wide spectrum of missions, with diverse sets of partners, and over greater distances. Warships are likely to become more important in delivering persistent forms of engagement in the constabulary space, whilst having to retain the ability to ‘fight tonight’. Trends in modularity can increase both adaptability over lifecycles and flexibility of missions, but support will have to match operational demands. More warships and deeper ammunition stocks should also be a matter of priority, with Artificial Intelligence and three-dimensional printing enhancing development and production processes.

Likewise, innovation should help address the growing importance of underwater spaces to both maritime governance and naval combat. Undersea sensors and submarines are likely to play a much greater role as opponents target underwater cables and the digital connectivity they provide. Those who can, will seek to leverage technology to make the sea more ‘transparent’. Innovation which allows technology to operate deeper and to enhance platforms’ autonomy, availability, support, and integration with other military forces will offer a crucial strategic edge.

Within this context, it is no surprise that navies are grappling with the issue of integrating uncrewed systems of various sizes and functions. These assets are already proving themselves in Ukraine and those of the contested waters across the strait of Taiwan to be of help in denial and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance functions. Uncrewed capabilities may give commanders more options, but only if they are reliably able to work with a fleet. This, in turn, invites the desirability for efforts in innovation to produce resilient command, control, and communication systems that can also operate across partner navies.

Finally, there is a sense of unease among strategists which stems from fears that technological change is not necessarily on the side of advanced navies. Indeed, the availability of technology would appear to be on the side of willing competitors which are investing in new asymmetric capabilities – from cyber to space and missile programmes – to reduce the qualitative and quantitative gaps with the most technologically-developed powers.

In a contested peace in which interstate war is a real possibility, naval innovation is first and foremost about how technology can help maximise the effectiveness of the ‘habits of the mind’. It is about how innovation enhances a navy’s operational mentality and approach. Change is made by human beings for the purpose of securing agendas that serve human beings. The men and women that crew, plan, and support fleets are the most precious capability which innovation needs to foster.

In this regard, constraints on national warfighting capabilities are likely to demand greater efforts in innovation to deliver partnerships capable of creating military effect timely and seamlessly. Similarly, distributed lethality calls for professional navies to instil a mentality among crews, marines and officers to maximise the effect of peacetime engagements, to inspire and reassure partners, and to outline what it means to be a leading naval power. In an age of competition, lethality has to start in the mind of each ship’s captain, each commando brigade, and each crew.

Thinking about how innovation can help navies to better prepare for war might once more very well help prevent it while delivering performance – whatever the circumstances – at the speed of relevance.

[1] James Mattis, Speech: ‘On the National Defence Strategy’, 19/01/2018.

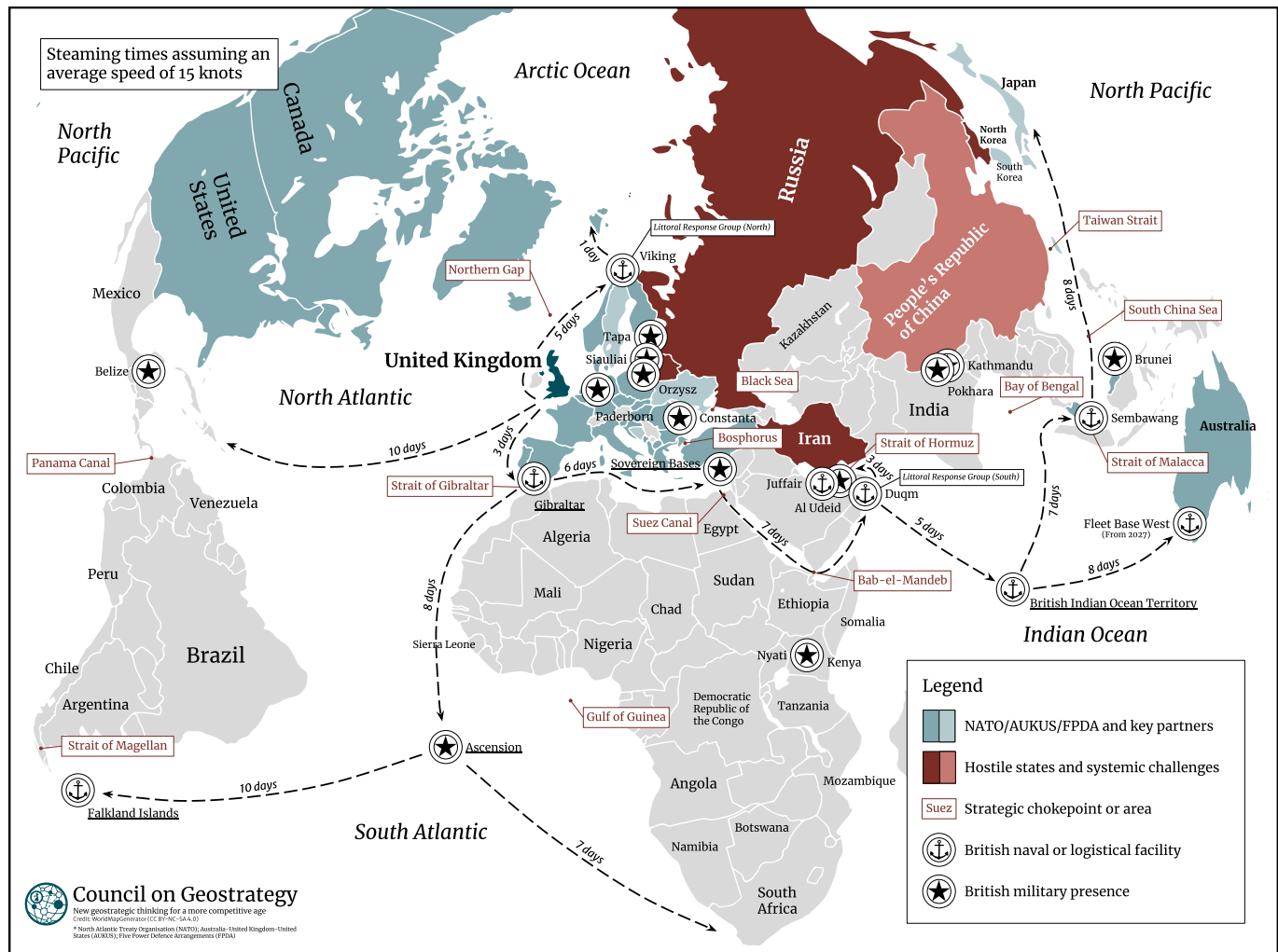
[2] Alessio Patalano and James A. Russell, *Maritime Strategy and Naval Innovation: Technology, Bureaucracy, and the Problem of Change in the Age of Competition* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2021).

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# Maps

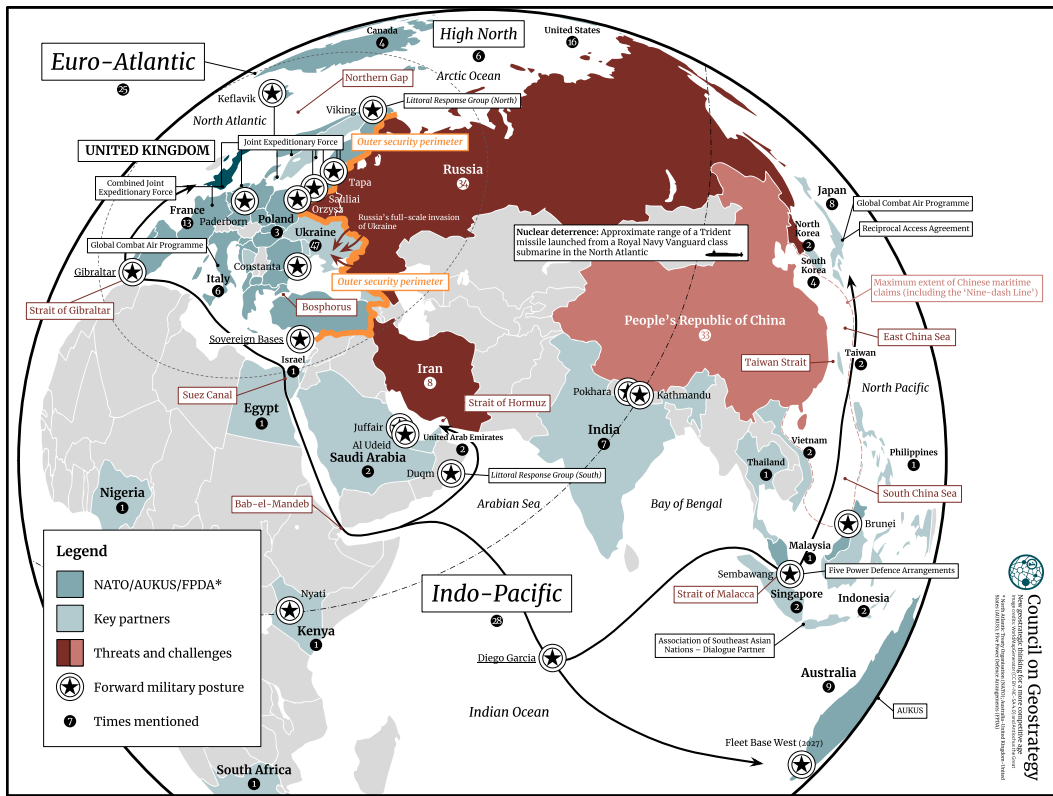
If visualised properly, maps can portray complex information in a way that the human brain can process and understand in seconds. That is why the Council on Geostrategy produces maps to depict geostrategic developments and phenomena, especially from a British vantage point.

Below are a selection of maritime geostrategic maps from the Council on Geostrategy's *GeoAtlas*.



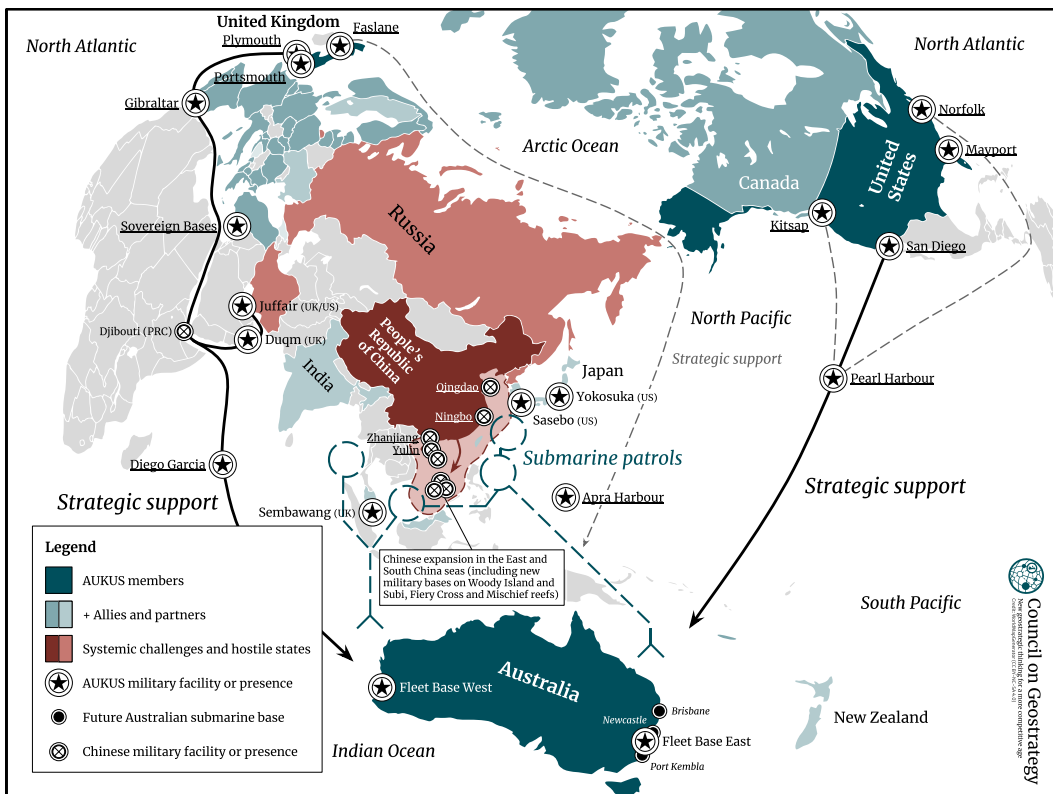
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# Notes

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