

Increasingly Contested Maritime Domain

We no longer enjoy presumptive sea control. Although the U.S. Navy-Marine Corps Team remains powerful, its ability to control the seas and project power is increasingly in question. Near-peer competitors are now openly challenging previously unmatched U.S. Naval air, surface, and subsurface capabilities. Potential adversaries are currently striving to contest our ability to gain access to specific regions of the global commons. We should expect future adversaries to pursue military objectives without crossing the threshold of open conflict, applying pressure across multiple domains of competition to produce a *fait accompli* contrary to our interests. We will face more challenging combinations of cyberspace warfare, economic influence, political shaping, and legalistic “lawfare” to control the escalation and de-escalation of crises in ways that undermine our influence and increase our reaction times. The deep-water ports and high-throughput airfields we once relied upon are also increasingly vulnerable to attacks with long-range fires. These challenges will only grow as competitors pursue concepts for holding our forces at bay at greater distances and denying our ability to maneuver in both littoral and landward areas.

We must develop capabilities and training that reflect the mutually reinforcing relationship between sea control and power projection. The Naval Services’ maritime strategy, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, states that establishing sea control may require projecting power ashore to neutralize threats or control terrain in the littorals. Similarly, projecting and sustaining power ashore requires establishing sea control in the adjoining seas and airspace. The Marine Corps must enhance its power projection capabilities and contributions to sea control as part of a Naval campaign.