LUISS �🏛

**Dipartimento
di Scienze Politiche**

Cattedra di Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali

Laurea Magistrale in Relazioni Internazionali

NAVAL POWER AFTER THE COLD WAR.
THE ROLE OF THE ROYAL NAVY IN
TODAY'S
GLOBAL CONTEXT

Prof. Federico Niglia

RELATORE

Prof. Domenico Maria Bruni

CORRELATORE

Gianmarco Sechi

matr. 639202

CANDIDATO

Anno Accademico 2019/2020

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This work focuses on maritime strategy and its evolution during the years, with specific concern to the period that extends from the end of the Cold War to the present day. At the end of the work, it is paid special attention to the Royal Navy and its conception of the role that the force plays in war and peace contexts.

After the explosion, on the 6th and, then, the 8th of August 1945, of the two only historical examples of attacks with nuclear weapons on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki carried out by the United States, the world would be completely changed. The destructiveness shown by this new technology, which made a number of victims estimated between 100.000 and 200.000, shocked the world.

All the previous conceptions of the relations between states were reviewed. In particular, a change happened to what concerned the former strategic vision deep-seated after World War II that was revolutionized, especially the balances between forces, including this new weapon. Among them, the most affected one was maybe the navy. Historically naval power affirmed thanks to struggles of the ship against ship infamous decisive battles that influenced past events like the battle of Trafalgar as well as the battle of Jutland. Both cases had a heavy effect also on what was happening on land. During the Second World War, there are instances of relevant collisions at sea, too. To illustrate, the Battle of the Coral Sea, historically important because it was the first action in which aircraft carriers engaged each other, or the Battle of Leyte Gulf, decisive to decide the fate of the Pacific campaign. These examples, that I have just mentioned, are all important battles that happened for the control of the sea, but navies affirmed, especially during the Second World War, their capacity to project their power ashore. One of the most remembered instances is the Invasion of Normandy of 1944, which was decisive to create a second front in Europe, formerly promised to Stalin, as well as to defeat German Nazi forces.

Nevertheless, this role tailored for navies inside the national strategic vision was challenged after the rise of nuclear weapons. These latter captured more attention of the strategic debates during the Cold War, especially since 1949 when also the Soviet Union, the other superpower that opposed the dominance of the United States, fabricated its bombs.

The Navy, instead, was increasingly confined in a subordinate position. This was confirmed from the rare examples of naval battles after 1945 and from the role played during the events of the Cold War as well. For instance, during the Korean and Vietnam War the US Navy, the most powerful naval force of the world, had only a contingent position upon the other forces, like air or land. The single example of naval battles happened during the Falkland War of 1982 which, however, involved the

Royal Navy. Even in recent episodes like wars fought at the beginning of the second millennium in Afghanistan and Iraq, navies did not play primary functions. Whilst, in the military intervention of 2011 in Libya, they played a relevant part in the blockade, bombardments from the sea and for the enforcement of the no-fly zone that was imposed against forces loyal to Gaddafi's regime. This was, however, not enough to prove their value.

The destructiveness of nuclear weapons implied the use of these weapons only as a deterrent, even though there was the consideration to use them in eventual approaches such as NATO's first-strike doctrine. As a consequence, their offensive employment was excluded.

In the meantime, countries around the world continued to strengthen their navies, spending and employing a lot of resources building new expensive vessels as immense aircraft carriers or evermore technological nuclear attack submarines. Furthermore, navies were considered to play a relevant role in nuclear conflicts too, thanks to the construction of new ballistic missile submarines that protected national deterrents. These motives, together with a personal interest in the position played from the Royal Navy today, convinced me to write a thesis on navies and the evolution of naval strategic thought during the years until today, to properly understand which role they played inside national defensive doctrine.

I have been wondering which was the role of the navies today. Starting from this demand, that is the key point of this work, I investigated the issue. I produced four chapters in which I examined different aspects that, from my perspective, were fundamental to answer this question. Firstly, I dwelt on the historical evolution of naval strategic thought, from the Ancient Greek until today. This was essential to understand the tasks of the navy during history as well as the evolution of the issues concerning this force and the position handled during history. Research on past writers and their vision on the naval approach made me understand the impact that they played on contemporary conception. Reporting Till's words:

Those interested in contemporary maritime strategy would be unwise to ignore such previous thinkers as Mahan, Corbett and the rest, whose works may help us understand the present as well as the past. Their counsel is of abiding value not so much for the answers they supply, […] but because they help to identify the questions that need asking. Given the importance of the complexity of many of the issues involved, this is no mean contribution to make to our understanding of contemporary maritime strategy[1].

---

[1] G. Till. (1982). *Maritime Strategy and the Nuclear Age.* London. Macmillan Press LTD. p. 239.

As a result of all the research, I am able to understand completely the importance of this message. In the second chapter and the third chapter, I thoroughly analyzed the tasks of the navies. While in the second chapter I focused on the activities put into practice during war, which were the traditional actions of the navies during history, in the third I paid closer attention to what happens during peacetimes. After the Second World War, in fact, navies started to have an increased consideration of tasks that did not involve a wide use of force. These actions, called constabulary, are, for example, contrasting terrorist attacks, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) like nuclear, chemical and biological arms, or anti-piracy and anti-drug trafficking operations. These latter are becoming the primary concern for nations, especially after the growing involvement of the economy inside national strategic thought. Navies are, thus, involved in actions to protect in particular shipping lines that are the major source of the wealthiness of states. Therefore, I considered examining specific missions, persecuted from NATO and the EU, against piracy in Somali coasts.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, I analyzed *Fundamentals of British Maritime Doctrine* (1995), fulfilling the function of a practical example. Through the exploration of the case, thus, I was able to understand the new aspects of the centrality of the navies. Moreover, through this instance I am capable of understanding the role of the Royal Navy for the United Kingdom, adapting it to the navies of the other nations in the world.

In conclusion, I managed to answer the central question that I posed at the beginning of this research.

CHAPTER 1 EVOLUTION OF NAVAL WARFARE

From the Age of Sail to the end of Nineteenth Century

Naval warfare was an important reality in Ancient History. It was considered a relevant part of the military capacity of a state. Notwithstanding its importance during wartime activities, there was no development of strategic naval thought, in fact, no one tried to investigate the principles regarding the conduct of war. The nearest approach to this sphere was, in Till's opinion, the one of Thucydides, an historian. In his *History of Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides said the war between Sparta and Athens and their respective coalitions. Among all battles, the author gave us the report of naval battles such as the maritime expedition of Athens to Syracuse. In his work 'He provided illustrations of the importance of maritime strength and the various uses to which it could be put'[2], by exploiting his personal experience as fleet commander, too. The lessons given by Thucydides' masterpiece would have had great influence also in the future. Also, one of the most relevant naval thinkers, Alfred Thayer Mahan, might have been influenced by the Greek author, as from other summaries of battles of Ancient History.

Maritime power continued to have a strong centrality in the period following the fall of Rome and throughout the Middle Ages both in peace periods, with a particular attention paid on the security of shipping lines, and in wartime. Despite this, we have no examples of strategic naval reflections. There was no need for a strategic thought because 'Naval warfare was largely a matter of instinctive and uncoordinated cross-ravaging of each other's coasts and sea-fights which were simply land battles fought at sea'[3].

There was a further evolution during the Modern Age due to an advancement of the ships and weaponry used in maritime warfare. It brought people to think how strategy and tactics could be employed in an ambitious way. An example was given by Alonso de Chaves in *Espejo de Navegantes*. He tried to encourage a study of the uses of fleets in a disciplined manner and to maintain this for the entire conflict, an idea that was absurd at the time. This was maybe the first attempt to create a fighting formation for the fleet. Furthermore, other instances were, during the Elizabethan period, those of Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Francis Bacon that attempted to configure a maritime strategy to deploy during the Age of Sail. Along with other exponents of the period like Drake or Hawkins, they were anxious to prove the importance of a maritime strategy rather than a continental one. For example, Sir Francis Bacon acknowledged the centrality of the control of the sea which conferred initiative,

---

[2] Till. (1982). p.19.
[3] *Ivi* p.20.

offered the chance of great profit and limited liability if things would have gone wrong[4]. There was, in the same period after the menace of the Spaniard invasion, a spreading naval strategic thinking. Here many seamen, like Sir Walter Raleigh believed that England couldn't be occupied from other states at the moment that they had control of sea routes, with a strong and strategically prepared navy which could protect them.

Important was how to accomplish the control of the sea. Some Elizabethan thought that it could happen through multiple attacks to the enemy's ports and ships, damaging his economic wealth, that would have created moments of vexation for peoples and would have obliged the enemy to defence. In addition, they proposed to damage the enemy's trade. Some of them had the idea of a progressive obstruction of shipping lanes: first capturing a base, then achieving control of the sea and, finally, extinguishing commerce. Others criticized this idea and suggested a quicker solution: or direct attacks against the ports of the enemy or enforcement of a naval blockade. These were very primitive strategies, which would have been criticized a lot from future thinkers because of their scarce consideration of diverse relevant factors.

The strategic development was continued in France, England's enemy. Here many studies were made in what was probably the first rigorous study of naval tactics, in what was perceived as an evident need for 'an art of naval evolutions'[5]. Father Paul Hoste's books *Traite des Evolutions Navales* and *L'Art des armees Navales* are examples of this school of thought. He compared the commander and fleet to the mind and body of a human being. He stated that without officers' experience and study of the tactics, the fleets would not have worked in a good way. He tried to apply geometry to naval battlefields, codifying many important formations such as *'la ligne de files'*, applying it to create a system of fixed conventions to turn the fleet into a single controllable unit. Therefore, during the eighteenth century it became clearer that this more formal idea of naval battles would have let a major profit from unexpected opportunities. For the same reason, a new cycle of naval writers, that oriented their manoeuvres against the Royal Navy, which was the biggest enemy at the time, worked up new naval theories. Their idea was that the main purpose of tactics was not the destruction of enemy's warships but the achievement of certain positions to better control the sea.

At the period the Royal Navy was obsessed with lines. English strategic thought, more undeveloped than the one of the French Navy, made his maritime force weaker. For this reason, Clerk of Elden wrote his *Essay on Naval Tactics* and pointed out the superiorities of the French system. Moreover, he suggested concentrating all forces on a portion of the enemy line. This was 'A revolutionary suggestion at the time'[6] and would have exercised a lot of influence over the strategic thinking of

---

[4] *Ivi* p. 21.
[5] *Ivi* p.22.
[6] *Ivi*. p. 23.

Britain in the future. The ideas of Clerk of Elden also inspired Admiral Nelson in his famous battles against France.

In the other fifty years British naval thinking was based mostly on Nelson's naval experiences. It was, however, a period of confusion in which the spreading impression was that 'Naval thought was a contradiction in terms[7]. Britain was concentrated on its Empire built around the world and, internally, it was surrounded by the contemporary confrontations between sail and steam. So, the examples of maritime strategic thinking were rare in this period. The consequences of this were a general loss of confidence affected from a broad obsession with the danger of invasion and the spreading fear that the Navy would not have been able to protect his coasts. This was a really ancient apprehension and it would have influenced continuously British foreign policies and maritime thought. This fear increased in wake of an article, written by a French admiral, in which emerged all the fragilities of British defence and how steam vessels could easily reach the coast of the opponent in a nighttime, taking a relatively affordable victory. This letter brought the entire nation into chaos, bringing a period of reconsideration of the internal balances, especially for what concerned defence. For the first time, the primacy of the Navy was challenged.

Two naval officers came across the role of the maritime forces, two brothers, captain Sir John and vice-admiral Philip Howard Colomb. The latter was convinced that there were too few documents and studies about naval strategy, and that it was important for officials to use these documents to study on and to take inspiration from, for the moment in which they had to carry out. For this reason, in his *Naval Warfare*, he studied tactics and the use of sea power relying on past examples. As an active historian he used elapsed vicissitudes to better understand possible scenarios in a conflict setting. He stated that naval strategy was born during the Elizabethan period in which ships developed the necessary qualities to control the sea and their activity became fundamental to carry on national interests. He developed the tactics of decisive battle, he crafted the notion of fleet-in-being and identified various forms of blockade - that for him, and about this he was in harmony with his brother Sir John, was the best strategy that could be applied to protect themselves against possible invasions. The key was, in his idea, the command of the sea.

Sir John Charles Ready Colomb discussed the defence of the Empire. In his opinion, it was more sensible than the risk of an invasion. The idea was that the Royal Navy should be oriented in homeland security and in estate's security, through the protection of sea lines of communication. Sea connections were, for both Colomb's brothers, the most important element to consider. If they were not protected, enemy's forces would have had an advantage in shutting the commerce down and in conquering colonies. This would have constituted the worst scenario for Britain. In particular, it

---

[7] *Ivi* p. 24.

would have opened a great crack in the nation's defence that could have advantaged enormously the foe. He argued also that the role of the army was to protect the nation, the Indian territory or their use in expeditions overseas. After the achievement of the control of the sea from the Navy, landing forces would have attacked the enemy by land and in the meantime, ships would have had the role of supporting force.

The works of Colomb's brothers would have been an inspiration for people and strategists, not only of the period, but in the following years, too. Their commitment would have been helpful for all defence thinkers of the time to overcome the terror of the invasion and to create a source from which they could have taken inspiration to build the new strategy. Despite the relevance of the works of both brothers, and in particular *Naval Warfare* of Philip Colomb, they would have been overshadowed by Mahan's. Indeed, his horizons 'Were broader and apparently more generally appealing to the spirit of the time'[8].

Alfred Thayer Mahan

Mahan is considered, from many, one of the most influential authors of the theory of naval strategy and maritime power. This fact could be ascertainable through the studies on the evolution of this subject. His *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* (1890) was studied in all naval schools and would have been the muse for many countries in the period immediately after, as well as today. The United States, Wilhelmine Germany, Imperial Japan were three examples of states which had learned mostly over Mahan's thought and based their tactical view on it.

His main contribution was to bring a theoretical foundation that could account a naval expansion, in an historical moment in which a switch in the philosophical concept of sea power was needed. Indeed, it was a period of technological evolutions. For the first time the US Navy ordered the construction of three new ships. These vessels were no more made of wood: they were all-steel, steam-powered, warships. From this moment on US naval strategy changed, adapting itself to the revolution that was happening among navies all over the world. Progressively US force at sea was transformed with this new type of ships and, as a consequence, improved their maritime policy expressing the will to broaden horizons. New fleets were built to secure influence in both the oceans – Pacific and Atlantic – that touch the American continent.

Many could be the reasons for this progress. Experts discussed it during the years. One cause was found in the fact that old ships were a source of notional awkwardness and had to be substituted. Moreover, another justification identified was the necessity for a new commercial state to protect his

---

[8] *Ivi* p.28.

interests at the sea. According to Till, this change took place through what Mahan had written. He was only a witness of this and recognized it, 'But he cannot be credited for initiating them'[9].

During the period in which the US Department authorized the construction of the three steel vessels, Mahan was publishing his first book, *The Gulf and Inland waters*. It did not have a lot of success but introduced the young officer to the way of historical research.

His father was an important man in West Point, an officer of the army and a writer with a great passion for Antoine de Jomini that transmitted to his son. The latter disappointed his father's expectations when he preferred to join the Navy instead of the Army.

Nevertheless, Mahan did not demonstrate special qualities neither as a seaman nor, then, as an officer. During the years in service under the US Navy, he discovered that he was not keen on sea activities. The breakthrough happened when he first came across an officer, captain Stephen B. Luce, founder of a new institution: the US Naval War College. When captain Luce encountered Mahan for the first time, he 'Understood that he could be for naval strategy what Jomini had done for military strategy'[10] and so asked him to become a lecturer in the new institution. The young officer was enthusiastic about the offer because it was a way out from his hated job on ships and ensured a job ashore. Therefore, Mahan accepted the proposal immediately. The next period was spent by the young lecturer in a research that could prepare him for the new employment.

It was in this period, as Mahan himself would have affirmed, that he found the illumination in his researches, coming across the ideas that would have influenced his future works. The book which inspired him was Mommsen's *History of Rome*. In particular he was impressed by how the broad naval presence and control of the sea of Rome implied a longer expedition for Hannibal and his troops through Europe, instead of simply crossing the Mediterranean. This was the example of the real importance of a Navy and in particular of the control of sea lines of communication.

Thereafter, Mahan started a new historical exploration, taking the Royal Navy as a model – as the most powerful nation of the period. As an anglophile, he had no particular trouble in studying the documents. His purpose was to write a book, not of tactics, but a historical explanation of the overall relevance of sea power. He found that the secret of British power over the years and against continental foes was his command of the sea. The deduction was that the greatness of a nation, as well as its strength, was an output of his economic wealth. This last was produced by commercial exchanges which were the only means, together with the protection coming from navies, that could lead to prosperity.

---

[9] *Ivi* p.29.
[10] *Ivi* p.30.

Therefore, in Mahan's opinion a country capable of generating a strong Navy had six main characteristics, which would have helped to overcome other nations' sea forces. These features formulated by Mahan were:

1. Geographical position.
2. Physical Conformation.
3. Extent of territory.
4. Population.
5. The character of the people.
6. The character of the government[11].

These categories were shaped in the United Kingdom, but they were also taken from other states that had some of these characteristics.

The idea was that a state had to be an island and placed near a strategic chokepoint – assumed as a geographical feature, such as straits – which they could control, through possession of useful ports and harbours in his physical conformation and wide enough to supply the materials needed for defence. For what concerns the population, the perfect naval power had to have enough men to equip the ships, both for trade and war, 'A seafaring'[12] character, as described from Till, and a Government ambitious enough to prosecute a progressive naval policy.

Mahan was aware that the United States failed to fulfil these specifications for most years of their history. The country's continental reality provided the insular character, even if his distance from Europe had implied isolation from trade and civilization. Moreover, the continent was so wide and rich of materials that there had been no incentive to follow a trade policy or to pursue the development of a naval dependence. This last had affected the character of the population, too. Another important element: the lack of a government that would like to bear this kind of conception.

Despite this lack of characteristics, Mahan was trustful that a change would have happened in the mentality of the population and of the leaders, especially during his period, the 1880s. Thanks to immigration, in fact, the population was less dispersed over the territory and the opening of trade routes with Eastern countries put the United States in an optimum condition. Now it was not at the periphery of shipping lines but at his centre. The author also considered the possibility to dig a canal as necessary to boost their importance[13].

Whatever was missing in this situation was maybe the most important one: the presence of leaders who wanted to prosecute a naval dependent policy. Mahan called them into the question. His book persecuted just the aim to denounce the importance of trade and naval policy. After him, many other

---

[11] A.T. Mahan. (2012). The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783. [ebook] Dover Publications. Chap.1 p. 7.
[12] Till. (1982). p.31
[13] This could be seen as probable anticipation of the digging of the Panama Canal. It was started just in 1881.

historians of the period would have supported the same thesis. Nevertheless, the political leaders were already conscious of the importance of a nation's sea power. This emerged from a change in the situation in which the nation found itself at the period. Mahan's books were perfectly timed to suit the situation and to provide a clear and reasonable approach to the new policy.

The author also offered some reasoning applied to the battlefield. Here, he stated that during the years, and in particular form the Age of Sail, there had been a development in technology. He took advantage to criticize the traditional reliance on commerce raiding of the United States' government. He found it the weakest naval approach possible. He argued it, taking inspiration from the case of the confrontation between France and the United Kingdom of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. France, in fact, was brought to its knees because of its poor support for commerce detection. One of the United Kingdom's was an upright example instead. This latter had known how to strengthen his forces creating a strong fleet and occupying important choke points. Thus, allowed the United Kingdom to control global commerce, taking advantage of France in terms of wealth.

Mahan took a lot of inspiration from his studies of the history of the Royal Navy. The case above helped the author to understand the basic and immutable principles, such as the fleet concentration, the importance of some strategic points or basis, the relevance of communication to coordinate the effort, that served to accomplish the crucial goal of naval forces: the command of the sea. This concept was really controversial and for this reason it would have been disputed a lot during the course of the years from many historians and thinkers which handled this discipline. Moreover, it would have been reshaped from other important naval strategists, such as Corbet.

The Influence of Sea Power upon History was an immediate success and his author became famous all over the world. Many would have described Mahan as the new Copernicus of naval strategy. Nevertheless, what did Alfred Thayer Mahan make so important for naval history? In Till's opinion it was not the identification of principles that would have been proved as ephemeral. Instead, his importance was produced by the accurate reflection on the shifting in the situation during that period. This observation would have been taken as a model from many countries and fueled the ideas that would have animated the following period, as for instance the United States that would have entered the war power balance, the building of a Japanese Fleet or the Anglo-German naval race. This latter example is emblematic. Many researchers thought that was because of Mahan's books that the rush to war happened. Fortunately, from the other side, there were researchers that did not believe in this thesis, and Till was one of them.

In summary, what made Mahan so prominent in the naval strategic environment? It was not because of his strategies or universal principles, it was not for history he reported – this was, in fact, criticized a lot over the years because he aligned historical events to his argument, inspiring from facts that

were useful for his reasoning and shadowing the rest of them – but, rather, he was essential 'As a historical actor'[14].

The Jeune Ecole

Subsequently to the circulation of Mahan's works, many authors all over the world took inspiration from him to produce their strategic concept, adapting to the situation of their respective navies.

In Italy G. Sechi of Naval Academy of La Spezia wrote a book, *Elementi di Arte Militare Marittima*, in which he underlined the importance of combined operations and the practicalities of naval warfare as logistics. In the Netherlands, Putman Cramer in his *Inleidung tot de Maritime Strategie en Zeetaciek* provided a theory of maritime strategy, in the panorama of his country basically confirming Mahan's theories. Same lines came from Russia with Captain Berenzin.

In Japan Akiyama Seneyuki gave the first maritime strategic vision to his country. His ideas were so much affected by the American one, however, he understood that the characteristics of the Imperial Japanese Navy could not be the same as the United States'. He realized that a full control of an ocean, like the Pacific, was impossible for his nature different from the one of the seas. His idea of victory was different too. In his perspective victory was the collapse of the enemy's will and not his physical annihilation. He had an important role in planning the battle of Tsushima, fought in 1905 during the Russo-Japanese War. This battle was decisive for the defeat of the Russian Navy. In particular after Tsushima, with the mediation of United States' President Theodore Roosevelt, the two nations signed the Treaty of Portsmouth which ended the war. Imperial Japan would have been considered, after his victory, a modern power.

Mahan's theories spread also in Imperial Germany where Captain Alfred Stenzel and Admiral Karl Batsch were both convinced that only a grand fleet and decisive battle could defend German's maritime interests. This was an idea endorsed also from Vice-Admiral von Maltzahn, a strategist at the head of Naval Academy in Kiel. In his *Naval Warfare*, vice-Admiral von Maltzahn underlined the importance of the sea for Germany. In a world that was evolving, more and more nations were embracing a maritime trade dependence and the idea to defend their naval communications. Many continental counties, as Germany, were beginning to approach these views and were becoming aware of the dangers and damages coming from the coast. Moreover, he handled the importance of the command of the sea which permitted a wide range of opportunities: from the defense of trade to naval projection ashore. He thought that battle was the keystone of naval warfare[15].

---

[14] Till. (1982). p. 33.
[15] *Ivi* p.35.

In France there were many examples of authors inspired by Mahan's works. Admiral Julien de la Graviere was a prolific writer in maritime history. His ideas were previous than Mahan's. He was a great sponsor of '*La Grande Guerre*'. In his point of view, the command of the sea was the most important aim of naval warfare because it produced lots of favourable effects in many terms, also in a continental war. Moreover, he thought that predatory war on the commerce could be effective only in the case of obtaining control of the sea first.

The next generation of French naval thinkers, placeable after the first World War, was dominated by Admiral Gabriel Darrieus and Rene Daveluy. Admiral Darrieus was a professor at the Ecole Superieure de Marine and his most important work was *War on the Sea: Strategies and Tactics* (1907). Daveluy was a prolific author, his most important books were *L'Esprit de la Guerre Navale* (1902) and *Strategie Navale* (1905). They had both a previous technical experience at sea. In particular they well knew innovative means that were spreading in the period: submarines and torpedoes. As Mahan and Colomb did in the same period, they researched for the importance of sea power substantially embracing the same theories of the prevalence of an offensive naval power - and not with a cautious war on commerce – which would have brought to the annihilation of enemies' forces.

Even though Mahan's ideas prevailed at the beginning of the twentieth century, there were some who refused to be converted to these arguments[16]. In England, for instance, Fred T. Jane was sceptical about the relevance of the command of the sea in succeeding in projections ashore or in operations against enemies' commerce. His idea was that a Navy could be created at the moment, following the exigencies that would have been presented. He was unconvinced also of the existence of general - universal – principles of Naval warfare. The view that deviated the most from Mahan's was the one of the French *Jeune Ecole*.

The intellectual origin of the movement was Baron Richard Grivel's *De la Guerre Maritime* (1869). Grivel was an expert of naval endeavours because of his father, who wrote about it and taught his son. He believed that these were not the proper strategies to employ in a conflict against Britain. In his point of view, the use of a commercial strategy was the best weapon for a weaker navy to restore peace, because it struck the enemy at the heart of his source of wealth. These ideas were publicized from the writings of Admiral Theophile Aube, the journalist Gabriel Charmes and some others during the mid-eighteenth century. The ideas were put into practice when Admiral Aube became the minister of the marine. When he was in charge as a minister, he decided to stop the building of warships, replacing it with the construction of submarines, torpedoes and cruisers. These were ideas relatively new, especially for France.

---

[16] *Ibid.*

This strategy was enhanced in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and then at the beginning of the twentieth when torpedoes, mines and submarines spread in many navies of the period challenging the previous conception of the predominance of big warships that appeared more vulnerable than before. This permitted him to attack the naval establishment whose ideas were in favour of the use of big ships. To this idea, many officers, in France as elsewhere, opposed tactics that leveraged on the use of fast, small and easy-to-manoeuvre ships. This increased the attraction of *Jeune Ecole*'s ideas. For Admiral Aube as the battleships were becoming more vulnerable also the strategic idea of the command of the sea was becoming less effective. The Royal Navy could no longer blockade effectively French ports when the warship's strength will have been reduced and small ships will have taken a more incisive role in the battle. The new strategy, suited for the French situation of the period, was to send torpedoes boats against British bases, blockading squadrons in local waters and cruisers to raid commerce routes – even if this was a violation of the Declaration of Paris of 1856 which branded the '*guerre de course*' as illegal. For defence tasks, only a few ships should be used.

In *Jeune Ecole*'s idea, this strategy would not have reached his objectives only starving Britain into submission. The *guerre de cours*e would have targeted at the heart of the British wealthiest people, impoverishing them. Their complaints would have originated a lobbying activity in front of the government that, therefore, would have been forced to surrender.

The impact all over Europe of these ideas was huge. In France naval policies alternated with ministers of the Navy, prompting a period of confusion. There were consequences in Austria, Germany and Russia too, in which policies were in some ways modified in shape with this view. Furthermore, in these counties, there was the stop of production of big ships and an increasing production of mines, submarines, and so on… All weapons which could be used to undermine an enemy's superiority. Moreover, the United Kingdom was widely spreading the fear of this strategy used against their big ships, and that the Navy would not be able to protect the base from unexpected attacks.

Anyway, after a period of dominance of these ideas, they lost their fashion, also in France, when new vessels were constructed in 1901. This was not because these theories were refuted as inefficient or unsuccessful. In fact, the source was a change in the alliance's framework, so of a political source. At the beginning of the Twentieth-century French leadership, hence, started to see Great Britain more as a partner rather than a foe. The ideas from *Jeune Ecole* thought as a defence guideline against the superiority of the Royal Navy were seen as not very useful at that moment. There was a shifting in a political view, in particular in the way in which the structure of the navy had to be organized. War was expected against Russia, Germany or Italy, none of these was a naval power as the United Kingdom was, instead. Therefore, the strategy changed and with it also the layout of the navy. France needed a substance fleet that was permitted to control sea communications, and areas both to protect

his trade and properties – the central government had many worries about his empire – and to weaken the enemy. Another function requested to the naval power was the projection ashore of troops and a supportive role during the battles against the enemy's land corps. So, there was no space for defence strategies which made way for a new, more offensive, the concept of naval warfare. This necessity to change strategic perspective was confirmed by Grivel, too.

The ideas from *Jeune Ecole*, that inspired a defence strategy against a stronger enemy, would have been put aside in a period in which more offensive one were requested. Despite this, would have remained the importance of this conception, and it would have returned many times in naval strategic thought.

Sir Julian Stanford Corbett

Despite his degree in law at Cambridge University, his vocation was for naval history. He started to research the battles concerning the Royal Navy, after a short period in which he exercised as a lawyer. Then, he collected all the experiences in many books. As a consequence, he became very famous in the United Kingdom, thus, he was called from Royal Naval War College as a lecturer. Maybe the highest acknowledgement that would have been given to his career was, at the end of his life, the role of official British historian of the First World War. He would have started to collect all British naval struggles in a book. Nevertheless, he would not have been able to complete his opera because he prematurely died in 1922. The book would have been closed, even if it would have been finished in a way that Corbett himself would not have appreciated. This would have probably originated from a superficial interpretation of the strategic concepts which he had introduced during his period at the Royal Naval War College in Greenwich.

These ideas were embodied in *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (1911), in which he proved himself as an expert theorist of maritime strategy, rather than a simple historian. This book had one more important characteristic. It was written by a man who was very close to Admiral Sir John "Jackie" Fisher, architect of the Royal Navy[17] and commander of the forces in the war fought against Germany.

His first major book was published in 1908, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, and gave him great success, giving rise to his career as a historian. After this, he wrote until 1910 four history books, among them: *England in the Mediterranean* (1904), *Fighting Instructions 1530-1816* (1905) and *Signals and Instructions 1776*-1794 (1908).

---

[17] To be specific, he has the merit of the launch of a new type of battleship which was the Dreadnought, in 1906. This type of battleship featured naval wars in the period of the First World War and some years beyond.

Corbett claimed to extrapolate the basic principles of maritime warfare from his research on past events. He taught these principals, remarking the importance of history to understand them, during his lessons at the highest strategic centre of the period. With these instructions he challenged the positions of other important teachers at the College that were not aware of the fundamental role of past events in the subject. Precisely, Corbett did not pretend that history could give a detailed rule for future battles, but it could contribute in giving the idea of permanent characteristics of sea power.

His view was connected to a specific temper of nations. In this case, events taken from the past would be useful to tell what a country could achieve, and which were, instead, its limitations. One of the most important factors was the technological progress of weapons. It caused a more complex development of issues connected with war. Thanks to this, together with numerical superiority of ships and the fighting spirit of British mariners, they could annihilate the enemy winning at sea[18].

Taking into account all these elements, the officer had all the instruments to start investigating what had worked and what would have been changed in the future. These aspects were useful when projecting the main strategy of the country as well as planning combined operations.

During his historical research, he understood, probably, that many elements other than to seek and destroy the enemy, were important in naval warfare. This was shown for instance after the battle of Trafalgar, which he examined in his *The Campaign of Trafalgar* (1910). Corbett stated that it was not as decisive a maritime battle as Mahan celebrated in his books. The battle of Trafalgar was an important battle, indeed, but did not prevent Napoleon' s dominance in Europe.

Corbett determined as fundamental tasks for navies the role to put pressure on the enemy from the sea and then another important feature, the support of landing troops. In this way, Corbett highlighted the need to consider joint operations of the forces of the period, land and sea. In the specific, this was a strategy on which Britain could leverage in an eventual battle on the European continent, exploiting his maritime superiority combined with the use of his land forces. This idea was considered the most important contribution that the author gave to strategic doctrine.

The ideas of the high command of the Royal Navy contrasted this vision. They were convinced of the effectiveness of the traditional vision of maritime warfare, the annihilation of the enemy. This strategy, however, proved unsuccessful during the First World War. Difference in views could be at the origin of the bad conclusion of Corbett's research work about the history of the war against Germany.

In his books, Corbett was influenced by Clausewitz and Jomini, trying to apply the general principles of warfare at sea. On the contrary to what Mahan did, he did not have an absolute view. Even if he knew, and underlined it in his works, the role of maritime warfare, he did not consider the dominance

---

[18] Till. (1982). pp. 39-40.

on the seas as the key factor for victory. In his view, it was however significant. He, always, remarked that men lived on land, and here victory had to be obtained to bring the enemy to his knees. As it was for Napoleon after Trafalgar. In this way, the most intelligent solution was 'The balance and appropriate use of armies and navies'[19].

As both Clausewitz and Jomini had found in their respective works, there was a limited character of war detachable from the idea of complete destruction of the enemy, which was the absolute concept of war[20]. Naval power was, for Corbett, a really successful means of the limited war. The last consisted of concentrating on a limited - focal point or weakness - that could bring him to negotiating tables. For instance, in case of maritime warfare, navies were valuable to take control of a particular domain of the enemy or of an opponent's shipping lines. This could bend the enemy, forcing him to surrender, and so reaching the political aim of the nation. For the author this was the way in which Britain got his position of predominant power, creating his empire and strengthening his influence in Europe. Despite the many real points of this analysis, Britain would not have obtained all of this without the presence of strong land power, as his partner, in the continent.

At the centre of Corbett's reasoning, there was the concept of control of the sea. While inland the main aim was to dominate the opponent's territory, the target for naval conflicts was the control of sea lines of communications for military and civil purposes, denying their use to the enemy[21]. Here came the great difference with traditional strategic thought, connected to what Mahan wrote, in which the command of the sea could be gained only through the complete destruction of the enemy. Nevertheless, World War I demonstrated that it was difficult to induce a fleet action. A possible solution could be the exploitation of particular flexibility of navies to put pressure on the enemy. With this strategy, you could force him to fight and, then, obtain a decisive victory.

Here he connected the idea of successful power projections ashore, considered as a good combination between military and naval forces. Many other experts criticized this idea taking into account that the technological progress brought a visual enhancement of defensive weapons. They denounced a lack of consideration of new means as for instance mines, torpedoes, but also telegraph and railway communications that strengthened adversary's defensive capabilities. As a consequence, in this period there were a lot of doubts about the efficacy of power projections.

---

[19] *Ivi* p.41.

[20] For Clausewitz in particular in On War underlined the relationship between politics and war, the latter was in fact seen for the first time as a prosecution of the first. For this reason, the war as 'An act of violence characterized by destruction' (C. Von Clausewitz. (2008). On War. [ebook] Princeton University Press. Available at: https://www.perlego.com/book/735246/on-war Book IV. Chapter XI) could be stopped only by the strategist, the political actor, that controls the original objective of this act. In this sense, 'War is nothing but a duel on an extensive scale… an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will,' (Clausewitz. (2008). Book I, Chapter I) that had no sense to continue at the moment in which this objective had been achieved. To this point could be connected the discourse on the limited warfare, both inland and sea.

[21] Till. (1982). p.41.

With regard to commerce warfare, the idea of Corbett was similar to the one of Mahan. He thought that against a maritime power like the United Kingdom it could be a waste of time. In the specific, with their naval strength and resources, Britain could contrast it having fewer problems. The difference could be made in the heavy effect that could be provoked if the country would have used this tactic against his enemies. In particular, the major power could be triggered with the employment of a complete blockade against the enemy, reachable only through the command of the sea. Nevertheless, attacks on merchant's vessels, both in narrow and open seas, could produce damage but were proved not particularly efficient without the achievement of a previous, solid control of shipping lines.

Historical events showed that major attacks, especially the most damaging ones, on merchant ships happened in narrow waters. This type of menace had fallen for Britain after 1856, when the Paris Declaration outlawed the *guerre de course.* In addition, technological development helped the defence. To be specific, new steam engines encouraged the construction of new types of ships, faster than before, and for this reason more difficult to engage. Furthermore, in this period were built new ships called cruisers that had, among others, also the task to protect merchant ships. Corbett was also in favour of the increasing number of Britain's merchant fleet. In his view, this would have favoured a new weight of the losses of ships. In fact, with a higher number of vessels, their damages would be proportionally less.

In consideration of merchant defence, Corbett was not sure about the old strategy to operate in a functional way. The old use of merchant convoys had become not so effective because of technological development. Especially, new advanced communication systems had simplified the way to find and pass information about the position of the enemy ships. Moreover, another point was that new steam was faster but, in the meantime, easier to locate. In this sense, Corbett was not so much in favour of merchant convoys[22] and promoted new approaches. In particular, he shared the strategic view that from 1914 was wide-spreading. He stated that there was the need to use cruisers in critical shipping points and, at the same time, to use patrol ships in the areas in which the enemy's rider ships could be stationed. So, it could be seen as an instrument of defence throughout the anticipation of the possible moves of the adversary.

He correctly forecasted the surface superiority of Britain against Germany in the First World War and its capability to position a strong blockade against them. What he did not realize was the place that German submarines would have played during the conflict, causing many losses to British surface forces.

---

[22] J. S. Corbett. (2017). *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy.* [Original Version 1911]. Scotts Valley. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. p. 134.

In conclusion, Corbett would have become a model thanks to his theories, in particular for the Royal Navy's strategic doctrine. This would have appeared evident from many references to the author, both direct and indirect, that would have been made in the various naval defence strategy documents. His importance would have been echoed, not only in Britain but from many navies in the world. Therefore, Corbett could be considered as one of the most incisive authors of all times, and, for the same reason, Till said 'No modern student of maritime war can afford to ignore'[23].

Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond

Admiral Richmond served in the Royal Navy during the first world war, after which he was nominated for a period as president of the Royal Naval College in Greenwich. After finishing his career in the navy, he became an important historian at the University of Cambridge. Admiral Richmond was a combination of high experience at sea, thanks to his career till the highest ranks of the navy, intellect and witty mindset. For his capacities, he was considered one of the best, if not the best at all, officer of his period.

As professor and leader of the reform movement of the so-called 'Young Turks' challenged the higher command contesting the efficacy of the orthodox methods used previously and during the first World War. In his point of view, the Great War had shown how old methods and strategies had become obsolete. The moment had come to use history as a model for new tactical and strategic theories. The struggle between what was expected during the war and what they reached was attributable in Richmond's view from the neglect to form an intellectual apparatus and to educate officers in higher aspects of their profession[24]. He had always a predisposition to reform and to criticize the *status quo* of the Navy. Despite his capacities, he was always affected by his nature. Till described him as arrogant, impatient and with a scholar-integrity that gave him a sense of rigidity.

Admiral Richmond, when he was a young captain, became a close friend of Julian Corbett, who inspired his interest in Empire defense and the need for extensive educational and organizational changes to come to a systematic study. With Corbett's support, Richmond wrote his first historical work, *The Navy in the War of 1739-1748*. This book was awarded an important prize. The other officer who received a reward like this was Mahan.

After an experience as commander of the HMS Dreadnought[25], the flagship of the Home Fleet, he started to lecture part-time at the Royal Naval War College where he introduced his most ambitious

---

[23] *Ivi* p.43.
[24] *Ivi* p.44.
[25] HMS Dreadnought was a Royal Navy battleship that revolutionized naval power. It gave the name to a new class of naval ships, named 'Dreadnoughts'. The battleship entered service in 1906 after the request of the in-charge First Sea

reform project of the period antecedent to the war, *The Naval Review*. He planned to give intellectual regeneration and challenge the exclusive policies that admirals perceived. His target was to develop a sense of deep-thinking about things developing a higher interest in the important parts of the working strategies, tactics and principles[26]. These analyses were subjected to censure and so circulated only between the personnel employed in the field. To obtain wider participation, the articles were anonymous to grant deeper reflections. The review had enjoyed a lot of success. Many entered and wrote reflections on it. Nevertheless, it was not seen in a good way from most of the senior officers, more conservatives and rigid on tactics to use. As a result, the image that Richmond shared at the period was not so appreciated, thus, he was taken apart.

During the First World War, he positioned himself against the idea of W. Churchill to send a naval expedition, which would have proved a failure, on the Dardanelles. Richmond shared the idea to launch an amphibious mission to move the situation and take advantage of the Eastern Front, but he thought that the attack had to happen in other areas.

In 1917 he prosecuted a new way to influence fleet planning and to revise Grand Fleet Battle orders, but he failed. In 1917 war at sea had reached a crisis stage[27]. After the Battle of Jutland of 1916, the Royal Navy embraced a close blockading strategy against Germany in the North Sea. Nevertheless, the reaction of the latter was to exploit U-Boat offensively against great ships. This approach obtained great success. He criticized the tactics used to control, stating that the unique concern of the admiralty was to bring superiority of ships to obtain the control of the sea. Doing so, for Richmond, they were draining fundamental resources that could be spent in a new aggressive strategy directed against the enemy's basis. For him, an attack against an opponent's coasts was too risky. He was convinced that the strategy had to be based on the control of the sea through the blockading action of the fleet and on an offensive action against the foe's basis, so U-Boats would have been neutralized.

After the war, Richmond's career turned for the better when he was rewarded with the promotion to Rear Admiral and was assigned to the Senior Officers War Course at Greenwich. This last one was a great occasion because it allowed him to exploit his qualities as a teacher and to perceive his scope to innovate education. Furthermore, his friendship with the new First Sea Lord was a chance to leverage postwar policy development. In addition, Greenwich allowed him to continue his writings and to enlarge his circle among the academic community. So, he lectured for the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RUSI), Cambridge and London Universities.

Lord, Admiral Sir John Fisher. This battleship was characterized by unique equipment of 12-inch guns and the first ship with steam turbines that led to a speed of 21 knots.
[26] Till. (1982). p.45.
[27] *Ivi* p.46.

In 1929, after a short period as Commander-in-Chief, East Indies, he published an anonymous article in *The Times* in which he criticized the admiralty. After the Washington disarmament convention of 1922, the governments of the most powerful navies of the period, in particular the countries who won the First World War, decided to put a limit on the size of the battleships – the capital ships of the period – based on an artificial measurement of 35.000 tons[28]. Richmond blamed the idea to put a general artificial roof over the size of the ships. He thought that size of fleets should not be decided in general but on the base of the size of the fleet and of the role that it had to carry out. So, he proposed to use a qualitative rather than a quantitative valuation method. In his idea, the tonnage of big ships could be much lower than that, by estimating the use of the vessels that a state could do. Moreover, he was also about a general idea to base the assessment of the strength of an entire navy on the tonnage and quantity of the capital ships. In his opinion, conditioned from the experience of war, submarines and fast and small ships should have a more serious role. The number of smaller ships should be taken into account.

This judgment, obviously, was not well regarded by admiralty's, thus, started to repress Richmond's ideas. In the end, he was forced to retire two years later in 1931. This did not quiet him. He continued to contest, also subsequently, the decisions of the admiralty. He stayed in the conviction that things ought to be changed.

The moment after his retirement gave him more time to spend on his books. He wrote *The Navy in India 1763-1783*, *Economy and Naval security* and *Sea Power and the Modern World*, many of which gained a lot of success and Richmond became an important personality also in the academic environment.

However, he did not compose a book in which he spoke uniformly of his strategic thought. Therefore, to understand his vision ought to be used in all his works to extrapolate his perception. He was a sustainer of the coordinate use of the different forces. In his perception, both land and sea had to cooperate to give more efficacy to the operations. He was convinced that their interdependence, under twentieth-century conditions, was even more essential[29]. Furthermore, at the period were spreading consideration on air power[30], and the author was capable of understanding previously its importance. He promoted a strategy in which the first goal was to control sea communications, because focalizing only on bombing the enemy, on his point of view, would have had a worse effect.

---

[28] The doctrine of the size of the warships, small and big ones, would have been corrected in the following conferences which took place in London in 1930.

[29] Till. (1982). p. 48.

[30] That would have been more obvious after the Spanish civil war (1936-1939) and even more during and after the Second World War. After it, airpower would have been affirmed such as a central and more autonomous power in the security strategies of all the nations of the world.

He raised the general conception of history both as an academic endeavour and as an important field in the process of education of officers. After his death, many historians showed that he made not exactly a good use of history. Indeed, he employed his researches to prove his strategies as true, a method that was not suitable for a historian. In this Richmond was similar to another important naval thinker who was criticized in this sense, too: Mahan. This judgement, however, could not be applied to all his books. In his last books, in fact, he tried to explain what the United Kingdom had achieved using the description of great personalities that made the history of the Royal Navy, of important battles, and of strategies that in his opinion had proved more effective.

Richmond was never as famous as Mahan in the field of naval strategy. Anyway, his works were very important. In particular, they were the inspiration of a new generation of thinkers and of the new general view of the period following the First World War. Furthermore, he 'Extended the pioneering efforts of his own teachers to implant them more firmly into our general consciousness'[31].

European Maritime strategy (1918 – 1939)

After the end of the first World War Admiral Raoul Castex became famous for his ideas. He wrote also in the period prior to the war, but he reached the peak of success for his book, *Theories Strategiques*, published in 1929. He presided over the *Ecole de Guerre Maritime* where he wrote about the figure of Richmond admiring his conception and, then, his use of history. Precisely he shared the idea that history was not a simple series of facts to be remembered but a way to take inspiration for new situations and to think about how to challenge problems that could have presented. So, it was conceived quite as teaching for life. However, he had less importance and spread in Europe in relation to other authors, especially Mahan or Richmond himself. In fact, there was no evidence of his influence outside France, for example in the United States or in the United Kingdom.

Castex, in his works, underlined the increasing matter of new technology, in particular, he referred to submarines and aircraft. These two new technologies had to be involved in new strategic schemes of naval warfare. Airpower, in particular, and control of the sky were becoming the key for efficient control of the sea. He was not considering the bigger ships as less important in the framework of naval strategy, rather he considered them equally important in the new context spreading after the first World War.

In his view, in this differentiation from Mahan, he understood that the idea of command of the sea, as shown from the Great War, was impossible in an absolute way. In a large context, it could be

---

[31] Till. (1982). p. 49.

granted only in a limited way, in space and time. So, his idea was that the Navy had to focus on the control of important sea communications and not the whole area.

In a hypothetical battle, the Navy ought to have first the control of the sea and then attack the enemy's shores or commerce. It was quite a precondition to eventual, solid, attacks against the foe. It could be very risky to attack the opponent without a solid control of sea communications. However, it could happen that in practice the commander of the fleet could overlook this to take advantage of the particular situation or specific opportunities that could happen in practice.

Wondering how to obtain this command of sea communications, Castex was convinced that the most effective strategy could be only to destroy the main force of the enemy, to disarm him. Maybe, in this situation, you could not attack directly, you should use a form of the blockade to impose a fight to the enemy. Then you ought to fight against the opponent showing all your superiority and destroying his forces, or the most, to drop off them without their shield.

The importance of this author was not given from the idea to obtain command of the sea or to obtain it through the complete destruction of the foe. His relevance was given by moral sprint. Indeed, after the war, many maritime powers were locked in stalemates[32]. We, already, touched upon the examples of the situation of the Royal Navy or the French Navy after the Great War experience. Castex's impact gave new forms of power at sea that could challenge that of the battleships. In particular, in the case of France, that did not have a strong Navy to use to control the communications, he showed that new technologies that were taking ever-growing importance in war scenarios could be the proper means to rely on to damage a more powerful enemy. In the same way, aircraft could help to give detailed information about the foe's position to prepare an attack directed against their ships, or anticipating an attack, too.

Castex took a lot into account the second naval power of the period, Russian Navy. He was the only one who thought about an eventual strategy to deploy against it. Here, after the October Revolution of 1917, soviet leaders were undermining one piece at a time, all the Tsarist establishment. The revolution targeted also the principals on which the Navy had based, until that moment. The New Naval School was carrying straightforward a minor program on protecting coasts against enemy attacks. The central idea was to use new technologies – mines, submarines and aircraft – to ensure protection against raids and then also a kind of support to the army in ground battles. The construction of a similar navy clashed with Marxist theory that all ought to be made to conform to economic, social and political reality. For this reason, the way in which the new Russian Navy accepted this theory was seen as quite controversial.

---

[32] *Ivi* p.51.

In Germany, the most important representative of the period between the two world wars was Vice-Admiral Wolfgang Wegener. In his *Seestrategie des Weltkrieges* (1926) he examined the problem, criticizing the manoeuvres of the commanders of the High Seas Fleet during the Great War for playing a waiting game[33] which gave, from his point of view, an advantage to the Royal Navy. The Officers of the German Navy, for Wegner, did not understand that the strategy could not be based on the defence of a strategic position that was not worth it.

Even though Germany suffered from materiel and geographic disadvantages, it was important to strike the enemy and break out the confinement. He suggested an attack from the south of Norway in order to challenge the supremacy of the British fleet. In this way, they could have forced the British blockading line and then have a more favourable duel for Germany, than Jutland in 1916.

Wegener's conception that a Navy, also in a weaker position with fewer ships, could have been an important strategic tool in support to his nation, was a spread idea of his generation – the Germans who were disappointed by the scorching loss of the war. His ideas had an implication in the Second World War naval understanding of Germany. However, he was criticized by some contemporary authors. To be specific, Dr Herbert Rosinski, who worked for German Naval Academy, blamed Wegener's strategies because they were too much oriented on the favourable position than on the disadvantageous number of ships of Germans. Rosinski thought, taking inspiration from ideas coming from the United States, that the party who lost the possibility to gain command of the sea was useless to help against an attack of the enemy. Moreover, he stated that the part who wasted the command was almost enabled to change the situation favourably. Furthermore, Rosinski did not understand why an attack from Norway could be better and more efficient than an attack from the centre of the North Sea. In short, although Wegener's reasoning seemed ingenious and appealing, actually it was proved defective[34].

Other German authors of the period proposed a new solution. The idea was to build new ships, not great battleships, but smaller ones, with the purpose to engage not in main battles as for example the battle of Jutland, rather in a new war on commerce. In Germany, after the experience of the war, it was imprinted with the maritime loss that gave a great advantage to the Royal Navy which could control sea communications and, consequently, trade routes. One of the causes of the loss of the war was just this, in fact, it triggered an impairment of the German economic structure and a general deficiency in the material that would have permitted the further battle. Given that was spreading all over the country a wide sense of inferiority, for what concerned naval power, an offensive and equal engagement were considered an impossible solution. Therefore, the main purpose was to create a new

---

[33] *Ibid.*
[34] *Ivi* p.52.

naval force, this time with smaller ships that could have the possibility to damage the enemy's commerce and, consequently, obtain an advantage over the foe. Proponents of this view were, for instance, Captain von Waldeyer-Hartz and Ernst Wilhelm-Kruse. They stated that the attack on commerce had always been a subsidiary strategy and that it ought to be converted in the main area of activity. Furthermore, they sustained that the enemy's command of the sea through big ships should have been accepted and that the focus of vessels – intended as heavy surface ships, submarines, cruisers and aircraft – should have been on merchant ships rather than warships.

Nevertheless, these ideas, shaped on an enemy as the Royal Navy was not considered. The real threat, in fact, was the one coming from the Baltic Sea. This vision was rediscovered from 1939, especially, when there were lit new disputes with the United Kingdom.

In this last, in 1938, Commander John Creswell published his *Naval Warfare: An Introductory Study*. In this work, there was a limited change of view in what was considered the orthodox approach of the Royal Navy. Underlining the unchanged importance of the capital ships and of the battleships, it was the first attempt to introduce the role of new, smaller, weapons. The role of these new weapons was changing, and they were becoming valuable for new strategies, in particular when figuring out weaker navies - as we saw for France or Germany. He studied defensive strategies and explained that they were not good enough if they would not have been employed in a skilful and enterprising way. What emerged from his studies was an increasing strategic relevance for weapons like submarines or aircraft as well as battleships considered as the most prominent part of a navy.

In *The Art of the Admiral* (1937), Commander Russel Grenfell came to similar conclusions, through a more theoretical study. In an interesting part of his book, he wanted to emphasize the impact of an offensive approach on morale and, in particular, the effect that a victory could have for a fleet. In the late '30s, there was the view of Captain Bernard Acworth, more sceptical and, in his way controversial. In his books, he criticized the idea of building new battleships. Moreover, from his perspective, strategic vision should not have preferred material over policy.

These three writers provided the assortment of ideas that the Royal Navy brought in the war[35].

Naval strategy after the Second World War

From the British side, the lessons imparted from the Second World War were told from the official historian of the Royal Navy during the conflict, Captain S.W. Roskill. In *The Strategy of Seapower*, he focused on the role of history as a teacher for the future. He underlined that the one who did not

---

[35] *Ivi* p.54.

understand lessons from the past was condemned to repeat his mistakes in the future. The study of past events ought to be fundamental for officers to consider before taking decisions in action.

From his documents appeared revenge of maritime power during World War II. It was, nearly, an added value for strategy in general and a method to bring an enemy to fight in the theatre of your own choice. This scheme was relatively important, in particular, when strategies were considered against an enemy who preferred land battles – a continental nation – as Germany for instance. Unfortunately, from his point of view, the United Kingdom did not benefit from it.

In his works, Roskill was really critical against the British war experience. He judged the Royal Navy unprepared for the war. From the author's point of view, this was the result of some different conditions. The four most important of these were individuated into a passing infatuation for continental, reluctance to spend necessary resources, inadequate co-operation between branches of the military and defiance in the Navy's own policies and programs[36]. Roskill declared that certain errors committed by the Royal Navy were the outcome of the Admiralty's persistent idea to follow passed models and fallacious concepts. In particular being concentrated on the equipment of a big battleship to pursue a decisive battle, rather than giving a little bit more attention on forsaken elements such as the defence of merchant ships. The extreme use of heavy-gunships to follow a crucial battle against the enemy proved to be not resolutive. In Roskill's view the Admiralty, during the formulation of strategies, had not taken into consideration the role played by new technological advancements in weapons like submarines and aircraft. This had been shown in the case of the battle against German U-Boats. At this juncture, Admiralty had manifested too much stress on offensive measures, but they were not prepared on the methods of convoy and escort.

Furthermore, although the British naval strategy proved erroneous in many episodes, the Royal Navy demonstrated that his superiority was intact. This was substantiated from a solid form of maritime control and from actions against trade. Naval supremacy of British forces permitted to impact on the final outcome, in the specific, preventing from German's overseas expeditions. Indeed, the defence of commerce is essential for the national economy during wartimes. An economic advantage could enable the launch of a final decisive offensive.

The most important consequence of the Second World War, what it proved, was the importance of the navy in a conflictual context, especially, in a war that had involved all the continents. Against the supporters of both air and continental land power, it was almost a vengeance of naval power that proved to be as important as them in a war and demonstrated that maritime aspects could not play a secondary position.

---

[36] *Ivi* p.55.

This was the conclusion on which came Captain Roskill, who has indulged also from American writings as the one of Bernard Brodie. His *Guide to Naval Strategy* (1942) became immediately a naval classic and a book taught in naval schools, employed to form new officers. Even if Brodie's work was different in the approach – more theoretic – he came to similar conclusions of Roskill's more historical reconstruction.

Brodie shared the idea of the command of the sea. He thought that the key task for a navy was to deploy violence to keep his ships moving and to stop one of the enemies. Again, the most successful method to achieve this aim was to use force to defeat the fleet that the foe could place in the area. The Command of the sea gave, to the one who owned it, a power that was unfamiliar for a continental country. In particular, it could give the advantage to conduct a decisive function of transferring its own forces and preventing the enemy from doing the same[37].

The same concepts appeared from the triumphant report of Admiral Chester W. Nimitz of 1947, immediately after the end of the war. Recalling a comment of 1657, he stated that the achieving of sea power and the practice of 'applying pressure against the enemy'[38] was not changed from the past days. Moreover, he was confident that the basic principles of warfare did not have been changed. He reported also that from the moment when the United States had achieved absolute control of the sea, more pervasive than the one ever gained by Britain, there was the risk that it could be taken for granted. Moreover, in his report, he wanted to stress that it had been reached through the employment of naval air-sea forces that had succeeded in destroying Japanese and German forces at sea.

He did not mention the importance of the defence of trade, however, he shared Brodie's opinion on technology. New technologies were not limiting the power of navies, but rather they were increasing the possibilities to reach a greater control than ever before. In particular, the development of the airpower, combined with naval power, gave a new striking weapon that increased flexibility, range and power. The use of these elements in World War II both in naval and ground battles was one of the great achievements in modern warfare[39].

Air-sea power showed his capacities in particular in the Pacific's theatre. Here, the Navy demonstrated that, throughout the use of new aircraft carriers, they could concentrate the air strength on a central point to overwhelm the foe's defences. This type of ships put into practice attributes such as mobility and concentration, that were not possessed in the same way from other forces. It had been proved for the first time in the battle of the Coral Sea of 1942.

---

[37] *Ivi* p.56.
[38] *Ibid.*
[39] C.W. Nimitz. (1947). *Report to Secretary of the Navy. December.* Reprinted by Brassery's Naval Annual. Portsmouth. (1948).

In a period when there was a spread focus over the idea of how to use nuclear weapons, an explanation of the importance of naval warfare and, in particular, which role it could have played on the battlefield, was needed. It was, maybe, for this specific purpose that the US Navy made a report like this. On the basis of these views, they could have asked for more resources which, otherwise, would have been employed in the nuclear sector or from other forces. These reports, in general, gave an idea of the overall satisfaction of naval officers, who were glad about the performance and importance of sea power.

The advent of nuclear weapons was changing the entire situation and creating some turbulence among naval thinkers. For example, in Europe, there were several who discussed it, such as Admiral P. Barjot in France, Sir Peter Gretton in Britain and Edward Wegener in Germany.

All were aware of the importance of sea power. Barjot wrote about the history of the French Navy to the use of air-sea forces, focusing on the diverse implications. Gretton tried to extract, from historical experience, general principles of naval warfare. He tried to modify them to suit the modern conditions and underlined the importance of past experiences for the future. Wegener used recent battles and naval experiences, in particular circumstances in which the German Navy was implicated, to demonstrate that naval theory of Mahan and Corbett had to be rejected. He identified two indispensable terms for sea power: fleet and strategic position[40]. Furthermore, he distinguished two situations of naval action, from one side offensive to gain naval power and, from the other side, defensive in which navies were employed to save the *status quo*. Finally, he distinguished between control of the sea and mastery of the sea. To illustrate, the first one means the uncontested use of the sea whilst the second a secure condition to exploit it.

All three authors were aware of the changed situation caused by the growing importance of nuclear weapons. Barjot defended naval power reconnecting to the function of carriage and explained that it was increasing and not diminishing in relevance, that ships were safer in case of nuclear war and that, in any case, they would have also incorporated this new technology. However, from his point of view, Gretton believed that in a nuclear war the role of navies would have been reduced to search and rescue functions.

Wegener tried to study different naval activities in wartime that would have implied the use of nuclear weapons. In his work, however, great importance was given to naval conflicts in this situation. He split conflicts at sea into two parts, from one side there was the naval strategy employed in conditions of war when navies fight to take the command of the sea, and, from the other side, there were the maritime approaches implied in a non-war situation.

---

[40] *Ivi* p.57.

In short, anyway, all three authors shared the idea that in general navies would have played some tasks in conventional operations, fought in the shadow of the strategic nuclear stalemate[41]. They understood in fact that the destruction caused by this new type of technology would have made them unusable. The inhibition of their utilization would have put back into the game the conventional war, especially in a period of particular turbulence, created by the opposition of the two main winners of the Second World War. Gretton, in particular, provided an idea of the use of navies in the Cold War, for instance in intervention wars or struggles for the domain of sea communications, that kept their matter. He explained that these tasks required the use of orthodox naval capacities and of the general principles of maritime strategy. Many modern authors agreed with Gretton's opinion. A new debate would have arisen about the relevance of sea power and his possible applications in the nuclear confrontation of the Cold War World.

The Naval Power during the Cold War: Superpower's point of view

US Navy's strategic struggles

After World War Second, as appeared from Nimitz's report of 1947 to the Secretary of the Navy, the United States had gained the command of the seas. A control that was wider than the one ever achieved by the United Kingdom. Over the following years, they obtained a large influence all over the world, superseding just the United Kingdom. So, for this reason, it was born a problem related to the way to use and, in general, to maintain this leadership all over the world, in particular, passing through the oceans.

In the period that followed the war, a sense of uncertainty arose. In fact, there was not unanimity in the approach to prosecute at that moment. Many thinkers proposed the view of past historians and writers as examples to take in consideration. There were many important figures, however, who contested the use of past strategists for new approaches, in the sense that their speeches were not actual. As a consequence, another group of researchers proposed renewed points of view. A debate originated from these two different conceptions.

As a consequence, there was not a comprehensive theoretical approach that could substitute the past works. Strategists in America were all concentrated in speculations and calculations on nuclear warfare – in particular in the field of deterrence – and in which way to organize the armed forces[42]. Many issues were raised to challenge the traditional vision of naval warfare but, many of them

---

[41] *Ivi* p.58.
[42] *Ibid.*

remained unanswered. The problem was given from the same concept of strategy. its definition was clear in the late nineteenth century. In the middle of the twentieth century, however, it became a really complex and slippery concept to understand and, above all, to determine.

Therefore, a debate arose to find a definition which implicated many different voices. From one side, many had observed the strategy as a complex aspect that involved all elements of the relationship between nations and his military power. From the other side, instead, it was seen rather as a more specific concept, that encompassed particular situations such as technical abilities of warships or aircraft or financial resources to allocate in one or another. This lack of cohesive thinking was a problem which persisted for the entire Cold War period. This was at the origin of the lack of a grand strategy that could be reached only with a close-knit thought of what strategy was and how to use it for domestic purposes.

In practice there was a kind of distinction between diplomacy and military employment, instead of a focus on the problem as a whole, thus, navy as a tool to pursue political and diplomatic ends. Strategy, generally, was viewed as the use of force to achieve national goals, so, for this reason, it was subjected to domestic vision, ideology and perspectives. This confusion was, at the same moment, cause and effect of the lack of a cohesive theoretical base[43]. The situation became more intricate at the end of the forties', at the moment immediately after the end of the war, when many suggested incorporating different services or when there was a big debate over the role of the Navy and, consequently, of the budget that had to be spent on it, too. Even if this was a political problem the issue was masked, especially within the Defense Department or lobbies' environment, in a strategic one.

In the United States of 1945, and for many reasons also during the war, the central figure of inspiration for what concerned naval approach was Mahan. For the main strategists of the period of the war as well as some battles in the Pacific, for instance, the one of Leyte Gulf[44], confirmed the centrality of the command of the sea for navies as Mahan had stated half a century before. However, in this conclusion was, in a certain way, obfuscated the position played by submarines and other, we could say, "non-traditional" weapons, that with their strikes on tankers or on trade routes of the Japanese Empire, had played a fundamental stake to undermine the enemy principally from an economic point

---

[43] Till. (1982). p.59.

[44] The Battle of Leyte Gulf was the largest naval battle of World War II and considered by many the most extensive naval battle in history with over 200000 personnel involved. It was fought from 23 to 26 October 1944 near the Philippines from US naval forces, together with Australian's, and the Imperial Japanese Navy. It was tactically fundamental to cut the connections between the Japanese Empire and his colonies in south-east Asia. The area was, in fact, essential for new resources, in particular oil. It was the last battle between battleships in history. It consisted of four separate engagements: Battle of the Sibuyan Sea, the battle of Surigao Strait, battle off Cape Engaño and the battle of Samar. The victory gave a great advantage to the United States in the war of the Pacific and, thus, many considered it a decisive naval battle.

of view. Anyway, the figure of Mahan and his theories were again the focal points of the strategic theories of the period.

Some authors tried to apply his ideas to modern problems. We had, in this context, the writings of Bernard Brodie[45], Anthony E. Sokhol in his *Sea power in the Nuclear Age* (1961), or Admiral J. J. Clark and Captain H. Barnes in their *Sea Power and Its Meanings* (1966). Other attempts were done in the way of summarizing Mahan's historical views, as did William Reitzel. In the meantime, it was popular also at Naval War College to hear of writings or reflections about his works and their application in modern contexts.

As a result, many questions were raised about the validity of his ideas in the context of the Cold War. In particular, there were some problems at the base of Mahan's thought. His vision was that human principles could be deducted from history, such as the scientific method. The problem was that his works used to be not so precise as the moderns from a historical point of view. Furthermore, another important point challenged was the idea of technology. In particular, for the author of the nineteenth century, it was not important enough to consider it as a principle. In this way history, and specifically, both World Wars' experience, had shown instead the relevance of the use of new weapons and the relative impossibility to consider them not fundamental in strategic discourses.

For this reason, in *The Sea in Modern Strategy* (1967), L. W. Martin contested the role of the past writings from Mahan, and from Corbett too, to inspire the modern vision. The thesis carried on in this book was that technological developments had become essential from a strategic point of view because it had changed all the way to look at war. He referred, especially, to the fact that naval war was no more a simple struggle between ships at sea, because it had turned into a more problematic issue.

Naval propulsion, or missiles or aircraft, all these technological developments revolutionized the utilization of ships in sea warfare. It changed from two angles: one was the fact that missiles, submarines and aircraft became the most dangerous threat for battleships and the second that the task for vessels had become the attack coasts. Bombardment of the shore, one time considered – in particular in Mahan's view – the most limited task of navies, now, from Martin's perspective, it was the most relevant one. In consequence of this many navies evolved their strategic sight giving more significance to inshore operations.

Moreover, another important point questioned was about the concept of the use of naval power for national greatness, advanced from Mahan. This was one of the points in which he placed more emphasis. Many students argued that it was not like a universal rule, it was a conclusion appropriate only for the Age of Sail but that in the Cold War was not even true.

---

[45] Mentioned in the paragraph before.

For years naval history had been based on Mahan's principles, but now the historians challenged the accuracy of the author in explaining past events[46]. In *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (1976), Paul M. Kennedy studied the six conditions to become a sea power proposed by the American author, almost a century before, studying the British experience[47]. Kennedy, on the basis of the works of recent historians of economy, clarified that British naval power originated not from his natural characteristics but, rather, from his economic position. Moreover, industrialization had conferred the possibility, for land states, to dominate continental states. So, the advantage the latter had previously gained, in order to control commerce through the ocean, was overcome thanks to progress. Finally, Kennedy stressed the significance of a balance between navy and army, a statement shared also from other thinkers of the period such as Michael Howard.

As Kennedy, many other authors and professors of the period analyzed some segments of Mahan's research noticing that there were many historical inaccuracies. Similarly, the way in which he did not consider the importance of the *guerre de course* during the seventeenth century or in general, however, the idea that from many points of view what he wrote was not feasible in that period.

Historians during the Cold War started to place Mahan in the context of his time[48]. Some viewed him as a particular example of the culture of the period, such as an expression of American imperialism. Furthermore, he was seen as a kind of representative of the society of the period, a proponent of ideas of navalism and elitism, and racism too. From the other side, many started to see him from a different angle. In particular, they saw him as a kind of spokesman of the development, in particular technological, that the industrial age was carrying. Mahan's works were the product of a person at a specific time in history, whose ideas were imprecise in examining some historical instances. Therefore, many of his ideas were refuted and some of his principles, that for him had to be universal, were contested or modified in some way. But even so, he was kept, in the United States in particular, but also in other parts of the world, as a standard - a kind of model - to which all of the writers of naval issues had, generally, to be confronted[49]. Indeed, from the 1980s became relevant the vision proposed by Rear Admiral John D. Hayes in 1953 that, until another like him came, it was not wrong to study his ideas and treat them as a sample.

Mahan and Corbett were considered, obviously, as models when speaking about naval power. Nevertheless, the world evolved, and the idea of war and the use of the sea progressed with it. We saw, for example, how from the period of the industrial revolution the world changed and, with it, the use of the sea. For instance, after the end of the Second World War, the concept of naval strategy

---

[46] Till. (1982). p.61.
[47] Mentioned before.
[48] Till. (1982). p. 62.
[49] *Ibid.*

unfolded, becoming more intricate. Moreover, in this period a new idea of the use of the sea spread when new forms, so-called 'short-of-war', were first utilized. There were not so many works about it in the period after the war. There was the first attempt in 1971 of a British diplomat, James Cable, that in *Gunboat Diplomacy* tried to analyse categories of possible implications of naval power in limited operation not in a short of war context. Others tried to follow the common profile such as Ken Booth of University College of Wales, in his book published in 1977, *Navies and Foreign Policy*.

This new approach for navies complicated the idea of a confrontation between the power of two navies as it added new characteristics. In the specific, Admiral Stansfield Turner[50] wrote in a commentary about the Soviet-American naval competition that there were three different categories to analyse the balance of power: relative numbers, relative technological capabilities and tempering political and moral factors[51]. For the same reason, in the 1960s and 1970's, it was common to hear speeches or to read books about strategy in which officers or, in general, people related in some ways to the navy, argued about two main roles of the Navy: sea control and power projection. To illustrate, it was iconic what Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt wrote in his memoirs. He shed light on the importance of the economy for all aspects of a nation, especially for political interests. In a period in which commerce through the sea was the key to the wellness of a country, he thought that it required a large maritime capability to have a major influence on the seas. For this reason, with a special focus on his country, the United States, he imagined the importance of a stronger US Navy to pursue two roles: sea control with the goal of opening the sea lines of communication to traffics of both a commercial and military nature. The other aim was naval projection seen as the possibility to apply military power overseas[52].

Zumwalt had, previously, categorized four types of missions of the navy: Strategic deterrence, Power projection, Sea Control and Naval presence. These tasks were then defined by Admiral Turner, who described them not as rigid but as categories which could be overlapped and interdependent on each other. The capabilities of the navy were studied under this key. The old ones were not reworked, to these traditional categories of naval strategy there was the inclusion of new tasks more related to conditions short of war.

Criticism arose when many, such as Rear Admiral C. R. Brown denounced the excessively strict vision of this conception. In their vision, the ideal strategy had not been configured for only one force. Therefore, the ideas had to focus, not only on operations on a single field - land or sea or air. It had to be broader, giving an idea of the whole military strategy.

---

[50] At the period NATO Commander-in-chief, Allied Forces Southern Europe, Naples (1975-1977).
[51] Till. (1982). p. 62.
[52] *Ivi* p. 63.

This challenge tried to reply to a small group of intellectuals. Between them, there was Herbert Rosinski, a German naval refugee from Nazi Germany. In 1955 in his *New Thought on Strategy,* Rosinski, after discussions with other officers, tried to individuate a comprehensive definition of what strategy was, weaving some of the major concepts expressed by Clausewitz, Mahan and Corbett. The strategy was for him to control. It had to be considered as a comprehensive direction of power, differentiating from tactic, which was an immediate application[53].

This was, with the vision of Duncan S. Ballantine that economic aspects of war acted as a connection between the conceptual idea of strategy and its practical application, the base of the conception offered by Rear Admiral Henry E. Eccles. He developed the vision from Mahan, about bases and communication, and postulated a comprehensive military theory.

Rear Admiral Joseph C. Wylie analysed the major theories of sea, land and air power verifying their significance in the field they were thought but underlining that they lost importance from another angle. As a result, he suggested that the objective of a strategist was to control the centre of gravity of war, such as he intended to do. This was achieved thanks to the control of the performances of war. To this end the manoeuvrer had to manipulate the situation, taking advantage of himself and placing the enemy in a disadvantageous position. In his view the best approach was the one who could control nature, placement, time and weight of the centre of gravity of war and, that exploited it in his advantage.

Criticism built around a strict conception and the blind acceptance of the traditional ideas about strategy led to the birth of a new approach to education inside the Naval War College. This new method of teaching, proposed by Admiral Turner, consisted in thorough analyses of real episodes of war that happened in the past, from which students had to extrapolate the principles and the general problems encountered in a war context. Historical events were interpreted under the key of Carl von Clausewitz conception of 'War as a mere continuation of policy by other means'[54] so that military strategy was subordinated to political objectives.

Many "traditionalists", at their turn, blamed the application of this type of teaching method. In their opinion, the strategy was an intellectual process in which students had to understand the causes and effects of the relationship between naval action and international affairs[55].

Another challenge to tacticians was advanced from observers who considered warfare impracticable in the modern world. It was connected in a direct way to all the debate about the use of new nuclear weapons that, after the end of the Second World War, were overshadowing the role of the traditional

---

[53] *Ibid.*
[54] C. Von Clausewitz. (2008). Book I. Para. 24.
[55] Till. (1982). p.65.

forces. In the same period, the first missile Polaris[56] was launched from a submarine. In the vision of many, this was a combination of the best capacities of all the units used to act together from different points of the planet, all directed to a single target.

Nevertheless, the studies carried on the destructivity of nuclear weapons showed that it could have too many implications - because of the civilian casualties and wide collateral damages. Strategists took into account the possibility of a non-use of this new type of weapon and, in addition, they thought that also its use as a deterrent could be challenged. In fact, the idea that both superpowers of the Cold War developed was that all the solutions would have been better than a nuclear war, for this reason, they preferred to explore other ways to clash each other.

Thomas C. Schelling, a civilian theorist, wrote two books: *The Strategy of Conflict* (1960) and *Arms and Influence* (1966). He tried to apply the game theory, focusing not on the use of force, rather than on the exploitation of potential power. This project was connected with the idea of the utilization of navies during peacetime. Under the gaze of expert officers, such as Rear Admiral J. C. Wylie or Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale, it was criticized the way that a nation got mugged and responded to protect themselves. It could be interpreted as a failure of their deterrent policy. The latter officer argued that the whole method of game theorists was difficult to apply in war condition because it was not as rational as politics. So, using a rational method to frame these types of situations, could not fit the reality or could not incorporate all the factors.

Moreover, another problem was connected to the relationship between new technologies and strategies, in particular the traditional naval strategies. In the view of many, after the Second World War, new technologies had made the old strategies useless, because new weapons were a great game-changer in maritime warfare environment. The mind of the officer was not easy to change. We had already seen how many problems and criticism arose from the different perspectives of the field. In this regard, Elting E. Morrison discovered conclusions on the reactions of human beings to technical change. Starting from this point, he inspired Admiral Turner to investigate the determinants which impeded progress and resisted to the development of new ideas. He specified three causes for this: the first was the increasing specification between the officers that led to their division into specialities and because of the new technologies accentuated the tendencies to frame the interest of a special group with the one of the whole Navy. The second was the exploitation of the burgeoning offers of technology, for example, to temporize in changing completely the existing systems. Some of them could be useful but others could extend the life of equipment who was not worth anymore. Finally, the increasing numbers of actors that had a legitimate interest in defence issues[57].

---

[56] This was the first Submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) developed from 1956 and first tested two years later.
[57] Till. (1982). p.67.

The theories on naval strategy, considered as traditional, were then seen as not applicable to all the aspects of naval affairs. Technology with a new more bureaucratic conception of political power led the attention more on issues of a non-rational nature that deserve more consideration. For example, the advent of new nuclear weapons suggested a new conception of warfare, in particular, it challenged "Clausewitzian" ideas of the relationship between politics and warfare. Many suggested that new and different objectives have risen from real conduct of war.

So, in this specific context related to Navies, many were the issues and questions arisen. Answers to this were not provided during the years of the Cold War from American establishment that, rather, 'found themselves generally perplexed with the problems concerning naval strategy'[58]. This was probably caused, from Till's view, by a lack of semantic precision during the discussion of these problems due to an abuse of the term "strategy". To be specific, it was used to indicate the use of military force from one way but, from the other, it was used as a kind of mask for political interests in international affairs of the country. All these elements contributed to creating confusion around the concept of strategy.

The lack of cohesion in American culture was evident. The idea was that more thorough research that would have characterized all limitations and all material and non-material elements of naval warfare, in all its aspects starting from war and peace tasks of navies, became necessary at the end of the Cold War.

USSR and the Revolution led by Admiral of the Fleet S. G. Gorshkov

After the end of the Second World War, USSR affirmed as a superpower in particular for its Army. At the same time, looking at naval strategy it was dominated essentially from a defensive allocation of military resources. In fact, the aim of the USSR Navy was principally to defend territories under its control from external attacks. A strategic vision that could be seen as an outcome of all the menaces it had to deal with from 1917, after the Revolution of October, passing through the threats that had been addressed during World War II.

A radical transformation of this perspective came in the post-war period when the USSR increased its influence all over the world as a superpower and progressively changed its mind on how to defend and expand its influence. Furthermore, a struggle was lighted against the United States and, then, the whole Western Bloc. This change materialized in 1956 when Nikita Chruščëv, affirmed as the leader

---

[58] *Ibid.*

of PCUS[59], appointed Admiral S. G. Gorshkov[60] – an experienced officer that distinguished himself during the Second World War in some important operations at sea in support of land forces - in replacement of Admiral N. C. Kuznetsov as head of USSR Navy. This latter had proposed a new strategy for the Navy consisting in the construction of a new fleet with big ships. An idea that, however, did not have been endorsed by the new leader of the Politburo. This could be one of the causes that led to the substitution of Kuznetsov with Admiral Gorshkov, hoping that the perspectives of this last, as well as his ideal configuration of the Navy, were like-minded to the one of the leaders of the Politburo. Another important factor was Gorshkov's relation with important men into soviet leadership, especially Army officers. In particular his relationship with Malinovsky (first deputy minister of defence), Grechko (soon to become commander-in-chief of the ground forces and, then, USSR minister of defence) and Brezhnev an increasingly prominent figure in the Politburo[61].

Admiral Gorshkov became the representative of the strategy change inside the Navy and could be considered as the architect of the modern Soviet Navy.

Under his leadership, the USSR Navy started to be revolutionized in its naval apparatus, increasing numbers of surface ships and in particular of submarines. So, the Navy entered in the clash between the two superpowers contributing to the nuclear strategy and, then, started to challenge enemy conventional forces all over the world. The number of surface ships and submarines, thus, would have been increased so much that they were for the first time capable of jeopardizing enemy's control of the sea during the whole period of the Cold War. Even if the number of ships did not ensure a superiority, it was a matter of fact that many more worries were created for the enemy. NATO, in particular, as well as all countries of the Western Bloc in general, had based lots of their wealth over commerce between them and other parts of the world, following the principle of free trade. At this purpose the control of sea communications was necessary. As a consequence, the reinforcement of the USSR Navy gave to the eastern superpower several options, both in a contest of war and peace, to cause difficulties to his enemy.

Gorshkov wrote in his official statements and speeches that the primary tasks of the Soviet Navy were supposed to be the traditional ever followed: supporting land forces and defending national coasts. From a practical angle, however, he ordered the building of a class of large missile-armed destroyers that led to the supremacy of surface ships on naval expansion. His position and projects were not

---

[59] After Stalin's death in 1953, the leadership of the communist party of the USSR was contested between main personalities inside the party. This struggle was won by the already president of PCUS Nikita Chruščëv who immediately tried to take upon himself all the powers. He shocked the world by publishing a report which denounced what Stalin had done, such as the personality cult or the crimes as the 'Great Purge' that made lots of victims. His leadership affirmed when he was named TIME magazine's Man of the Year in 1957.

[60] It might be found many times as Gorškov.

[61] He will have been the successor of Chruščëv as leader of the Soviet Union from 1964.

affected by the change at the vertice of the USSR, materialized from the substitution of Chruščev with Brezhnev in 1964. On the contrary, it was an acknowledgement of the excellent work done. Gorshkov received new honours that increased his importance inside defence environments. In 1967, in fact, he was nominated Admiral of the USSR Navy[62]. From this moment on he wrote mostly about a more global role of the Navy and its possible role to project a spread nuclear strategy.

Gorshkov's vision of navies, and sea power in general, could be understood from the article *'Navies in War and Peace'* published by Morskoi Sbornik, a naval journal, in 1972-1973 and from his book *The Sea Power of the State* (1976), published subsequently also in English, under Gorshkov himself supervision, in 1979.

These documents followed the intention of Gorshkov to convince political leaders and senior representatives of the defence ministry about the real importance of the Navy and of a, more elaborated, maritime strategy. It was a historical reconstruction, in particular using relevant events of the Soviet Navy that showed its role in the growing centrality of the USSR in International relations. So, it was not a mere historical account, in fact, it could be seen as a kind of propaganda that the Admiral did to heighten the consciousness and to move forward with his vision. He drew attention to the fact that all the enemies had a well-organized maritime force and that had reached the control of the sea. This point was unacceptable for a superpower like the USSR. Hence, new policies had the aim to challenge this superiority and to cause damages to the opponents.

To convince the high officials of defence, Gorshkov underlined the effect of new technologies, in particular nuclear weapons, on maritime warfare that in his opinion had been revolutionized. He brought two principal arguments: as I have already said the role of nuclear weapons and, the second, was readiness for war. For the author nuclear weapons ought to be applied to naval warfare, playing a fundamental position on the development of this field. The advantage of the implementation of nuclear warfare in relation to naval power was the overcoming of the restrictions imposed by a continental strategy because of the country's geography[63]. For the second point, he tried to illustrate the centrality of the permanent preparation to war. He made references to strategic and tactical thinking, fully aware of the evolution of techniques and technologies of the field, not to be surprised from the enemy, related to it a second point was the keeping of effective training and, in the end, the preservation of high morale between forces. In one phrase his idea could be summarized in 'always ready for war'[64].

---

[62] Thanks to this acknowledgement he obtained importance as Commander-in-Chief of ground forces and of the Commander of Strategic Rocket Forces.
[63] Till. (1982). p.70.
[64] *Ibid.*

A man like Gorshkov, at the higher ranks of a nation as USSR, had of course to prove the relation between his ideas with the pervasive ideology embedded in state's doctrine and of the leadership, beneath which this change in naval strategic conception was happening. In this regard, the first articles - the great majority of them - of 'Navies in War and Peace' were a historical analysis of events that happened during the Second World War[65]. The reconstruction of occurrences regarding sea warfare and the evolution of naval power were presented under this key, according to the ideological influence pervasive in the Soviet Union. For this reason, many were the references to Marx, Engels and Lenin, dressed by Russian patriotism. All that was expected from a man of that calibre. One thing to underline was, tough, all this analysis of episodes of the war, the accent on technology and how this progress brought to the evolution of maritime warfare could be, for Till, an aspiration for USSR to reach equivalence with the United States and, then, with other western capitalist countries. It could be seen as almost a march against the ideology of communism and all principles on which USSR bases his policies.

Despite this, Gorshkov tried to put this vision in a different way to achieve his ends: 'This political orthodoxy is matched by an unambiguous adherence to accepted Soviet overall military doctrine. No claim had been made that navies had a predominant role in the modern war or that maritime can be shown to be superior to continental strategy. Historical experience, as well as the facts of the contemporary world, were cited to support the central doctrine that although each armed service had a unique contribution to make, 'It is one part of a larger whole'[66]. As a consequence, in his view, victory came from cooperation of all forces under a homogeneous direction and a common strategic vision from a doctrinal point of view. Equally important, he gave more strategic importance to continental warfare, in the sense that it was through the occupation of land that victory would have been accomplished.

The only pretence made for navies was that in periods of peace it was the best force to demonstrate the strength and secure more influence for the state beyond its borders. The examples brought by Gorshkov in this sense were in particular visits on ports of allied states all over the world or naval operations related to commerce, as for example defence of merchant's vessels. These kinds of operations were an effective way for states to prosecute power and project influence, not in a regional area but worldwide.

This part of naval power was expanding his importance during the period of the Cold War, becoming fundamental for states. To be specific, the use of the sea for trade routes became relevant for all countries to prosper and get richer. History had shown how a nation who underestimated the value of

---

[65] Or "The Great Patriotic War" as it was called from Stalin in Russia and other countries members of USSR or, however, that were under his influence sphere, the conflict fought during the period from 22 June 1941 to 9 May 1945.
[66] Till. (1982). p. 70.

the navy or who was defeated in a naval conflict, like Germany during the First World War, had to face a relative decline both from an economic and a political point of view.

The emphasis given to peacetime tasks of the navy created a menace in Western countries' eyes. The apprehension was driven by the fact that the aim of the new Soviet Navy could be the beginning of a more adventurous foreign policy led by ideology and directed, in particular, to the Third World countries, a global area where the two superpowers were challenging for supremacy. In particular, the new task of Soviet naval forces could be of power projection to increase his influence in different areas, to support regimes that were on their side and to help revolutionary movements, especially those who were inspired by Marxist-Leninist ideology, to assume the command.

Furthermore, other Western specialists alarmed on the possible use of the new naval power as a confrontation on the nuclear field taking advantage from the threat of use offensively this type of weapons from vessels or submarines and, at the same time, in defence purposes against the opponent's military capacities. The last idea appeared more reasonable by comparing it with the traditional Soviet strategic concept of defence of the state and his shores.

Gorshkov underlined many times the political influence that the USSR could play if the Navy had been structured in a different way, which means, strengthening through the allocation of more resources for new warships, new technologies and, finally, with a refurbished strategic vision. The author did it with the aim to hold the attention of leaders attracted from a perspective of the USSR as a 'Champion of national liberation movements and the opponent of imperialist exploitation'[67], a viewpoint that a significant part of Politburo widely shared. Moreover, the dwelling on the aspects of commerce would have taken from his side many exponents of very influential economic organizations.

At the end of '*Navies in War and Peace',* the author went to the heart of the problem when he focused on the primacy of strategy. In his view, the increasing role of the USSR as a superpower and their influence in many countries all over the world brought an enhancement of economic interests. For this reason, in his vision, it was impossible to accept the confirmed supremacy of Western countries in a sensitive field such as maritime control.

The nuclear involvement of maritime power had become a matter of national security when new weapons as, for instance, submarines with strategic nuclear capabilities[68], were built. This weapon was in the position to attack the economic and political centre of the enemy from the oceans, as a consequence it was a permanent threat for both parts. Gorshkov declared that Soviet weapons are not

---

[67] *Ivi* p.71.
[68] The first Soviet nuclear submarine, armed with nuclear ballistic missiles (R-13 SLBM), was launched in 1959 in response to United States' developments in nuclear submarines. It was the k-19, first of the Project 658 class submarines (NATO reporting name was Hotel-class submarine).

just an imitation of the United States' one, they were prepared to be fitted with the national security interests, in line with Soviet strategy with the idea to challenge enemy nuclear forces.

Submarines were, in his idea, not enough to counteract the adversaries. He was aware, and showed it through his historical reconstruction too, that the Navy needed other types of surface ships, maybe more specific task vessels that could give complete responsiveness in terms of approach. This latter had their intrinsic value bringing on different types of tasks both in war and in peacetimes.

Despite his assertions, trying to convince the contrary, his idea of the future Soviet Navy was in shape or, however, really similar to the one of the members of NATO. This opinion could be verified also from his ideas. Especially, he assumed that the effectiveness of a navy should be weighed not bearing in mind only the matter of the number of vessels or their size, that could be an important feature considering the naval power, but it was not the only characteristic to take into account. He, instead, thought of global navies as a combination of more ships that operated together with different weapons and that prosecuted different tasks. This combination produced a 'Balance of forces'[69] prepared with mathematical calculations. The characteristics should be the readiness in every moment because, in the period of the Cold World, it was decisive to strike the adversary first, possibly anticipating his moves.

The concept of the balanced fleet was at the centre of his book *The Sea Power of the State* where he underlined the differences between the qualities of the submarine-based missile system and land-based rockets and counteracted the impossibility to strengthen USSR Navy to fight against Western countries' maritime superiority. The base of this declaration was a kind of struggle against Marshall Grechko's book of 1976 *The Armed forces of the Soviet Union*, in which only a secondary role was given to naval power. Grechko underestimated its relevance. Therefore, Gorshkov tried to send another message to the leaders of Politburo.

From another point of view, the translation and, later, the publication of the book in English intended to give to the enemies the idea that beneath the radical change of Soviet Navy was not an aggressive intention, rather a defensive one. This development was, thus, directed to protect world peace working as a deterrent.

Gorshkov's vision here was that the building of new ships, and in particular the SSBNs[70], changed completely the hierarchy of all the forces. Their possibility to hit the enemy at his heart made this weapon of primary importance for national strategic perspective, giving the same position played by land forces. It could be considered as a really strong statement, especially taking into account the traditional strategic perspective of the USSR inherited from the tsarist period. Moreover, he

---

[69] Till. (1982). p.72.
[70] Nuclear-powered, ballistic missile-carrying submarine.

underlined also the special place that could be given to maritime power in peace processes. In that period in fact the United States' policy had been more aggressive in the sense of defence of what was considered his primary point from a strategic point of view, the control of the sea. In this way, the Soviet rearmament could be seen as a response and, more deeply, as a challenge to the predominant position of the foe in the field. So, as an idea of rebalancing the power.

In addition, in this key could be seen the denounce against leaders in general, but also historians and researchers, who underestimated the relevant role of navies, and maybe, even harder, against people who carried on an idea that it was unnecessary in the nuclear world. Gorshkov explained, indeed, that this idea could be potentially deleterious for USSR interests, giving an enormous advantage to Imperialist powers in terms of mobility, exploitable both in peace and war. This was the main aim of the US Navy prosecuted through the control of the sea.

In conclusion, from the author's view, only the USSR Navy had the possibility to compete against this target of enemy's naval power and to deal with carriers and other naval forces, on which the foe invested lots of resources and, for this reason, were so strong.

This was a kind of introduction of the following exposition in which he explained the shape that the Soviet Navy had to reach. Starting from submarines, they were at the centre and played a primary position in the strategic game. They were, however, vulnerable in the sense that their employability was substantially connected to the presence of other surface ships with the function to protect them. The latter had a fundamental role when dealing with other tasks too. To be specific, anti-submarine warfare, combined operations or attack/defence of merchant's vessels.

Furthermore, Gorshkov spoke about the principles governing naval warfare. He named them as "Naval Art", a mixture of theoretical and practical analyses based on experience – so inspiration from history but also, looking to the future, the application of new technologies of the field. The aim pursued - the destruction of opposing forces - could be similar to the "Military Art", differentiating for the nature of the operations and for the elements of the fight. As a consequence, the main principles had to be different. Historically the main aim of a fleet was to wreck one of the enemies – "Fleet against fleet". Even if today this approach could be identified as important, it was confined into a paradigm of limited warfare. New technologies, indeed, changed radically the objective of the navy that was focused more in "Fleet against Shore" tasks. Since there were two specular duties: to attack the enemy economic and political centre and defending the territory from strikes. The situation changed mainly with the advent of nuclear weapons, that were a game-changer, 'Set fleet actions would be replaced by long-range strike'[71].

---

[71] Till. (1982). p.74.

Inside the concept of Naval Art was often inserted the one of 'sea dominance'. This complex notion, invoked in many occasions from strategic naval thought, was interpreted in Soviet view as a medium – and not as an end, as many authors had written – to reach the aims of naval warfare. In particular, in Gorshkov's perspective, there could be no possibility to obtain complete control of the oceans, especially at the beginning of the conflict. The idea was to look for a 'dominance of specific sea areas needed for vital nuclear or conventional operations'[72]. The tool to achieve this purpose was the creation of balanced forces during a period of peace. This concept was exactly at the heart of the analyses because his future plans for the new Soviet Navy was to drive on this way.

The concept of balanced fleet meant, simply, 'Having the number and quality of vessels and aircrafts needed to achieve all the maritime aims, from those of strategic nuclear war to the peacetime applications of naval forces'[73]. Both quality and quantity of vessels were considered important. Moreover, he added the continuous control of the standards in the light of technological developments. To this, Gorshkov connected the constant readiness of the government to pay for an expansive reassessment of naval apparatus and of the high-ranking officers in preparing their soldiers to all possible contingencies.

In conclusion, although he had requested to allocate more resources on the naval budget, he affirmed the increasing importance of the cooperation between different forces. Thanks to the mounting of strategic nuclear weapons on submarines, today's considerations for naval power would have been changed and would have risen its position.

The evolution of the strategic concept after the end of the Cold War

After the disintegration of the Eastern bloc and the collapse of the Soviet Union, international relations challenged another stage of their history characterized by the presence of one, unique, superpower. The condition emerged after the Cold War, was of a unipolar world with at his centre the so-called 'American Empire'. This was featured by the influence and control of the United States that built a network of bases, 150 circa, settled all over the world.

The key for the preservation of this power was the control of the most important maritime routes, the "choke points", that had already resonated in naval strategic literature as many strategists shared the centrality of the domain on these traits of the sea.

In addition, with the advent of globalization, a more evident interconnection among states appeared, in particular in the form of international commerce and free trade. This was already considered

---

[72] *Ibid.*
[73] *Ibid.*

relevant prior to the end of World War II, when the most influential powers of the period, led by the United States, decided to meet in 1944 in Bretton Woods. Here, they would have created the economic structure of the future world. In this project, they would have also planned the establishment of an international organization that would have had the aim to incentivize open commerce to all countries. Even if this would have not been realized immediately, but only after the war in 1947 with the development of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), commerce was becoming a central issue for the world. As an adjunct, in 1995 would have emerged the necessity to put it in practice with the creation of a real organization. The World Trade Organization (WTO) was created for this reason, from deals achieved in the context of GATT.

This significance given to commerce was remarked during the Seventies when lower tariffs and lower costs of transportation would have enhanced the free trade principle, coming in particular from the Western countries. Today's commerce has become a fundamental essence of the richness of all nations. The superpower of the United States has based his wealthiness mostly on this. Therefore, they have erected themselves as the bulwark of the principle of free trade.

Today, the majority of commerce passes from the sea. According to the International Maritime Organization (IMO)[74], around 90% of the total global trade flows through the sea. A consequence of this is the always more centrality given, in naval strategic thought, to operations in peace conditions directed to the protection of commercial exchanges. With the end of the Cold War and, consequently, the cessation of the threat caused from the clash of the superpowers, the idea of naval power switched his nature becoming merely concerned with protection of maritime traffics.

This change started after the Second World War and, in particular, during the Cold War when many authors denounced the attention paid on these points, from new strategic visions. Traditional naval views did not contemplate maritime peaceful tasks. Therefore, operations to secure trade routes, inserted inside the category of constabulary operations, took over completely the naval approach.

The traditional idea of sea power, on the contrary, was relegated to a secondary role. This last has had an evolution too, through the years. The US Navy model underlined the relevance of aircraft carriers that proved themselves really successful during the Second World War, and Amphibious ships[75].

In recent wars, these ships were essentially used in support of troops during the operations and as sea basis, from whom were conducted operations and managed land and air forces. In this sense we could

---

[74] IMO is the United Nations specialized agency with responsibilities on the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution by ships.
[75] Amphibious ships had the role to support troops in landing operations, projecting soldiers on land and covering the operations. Sometimes they had the role of sea bases. They evolved during the years becoming bigger and bigger. Today these types of ships are able to transport landing craft, troops trained for this kind of operations and, in many occasions, also helicopters.

see the great influence exercised from Corbett's ideas on the importance of the coordinated use of all forces. While he pushed the combination of army and navy, after the two World Wars it was added interaction with air forces, too. And here it is the increased significance of aircraft carriers that has become a complex and multi-role weapon, able to carry a multitude of aircraft.

Under this line could be positioned the reasoning of Colin S. Gray. In his *The Navy in the Post-Cold War World*, he affirmed the possibility to consider a new dimension inside the grand strategy of the country. After the launch, in 1957, of the Soviet satellite *Sputnik*, the "war on space" started between the two superpowers. This struggle would have passed through the Moon landing in 1969 and the launch, from US President Ronald Reagan in 1983, of the first military plan concerning spatial dimension: The Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).

From now on, a lot of importance would have been given to the control of the space. The United States' superiority was based also on the control of the space traits, denying it to his opponents, even if many threats came from the US' principal enemy of the post-Cold War, China, as well as from other countries.

The idea of Gray was an, even more, remarked involvement of space within the state's grand strategy. We have had a significant utilization of these weapons for many functions, as 'US Navy, like the other services, though to a greater degree, because of the nature of the maritime environment, has chosen to become critically dependent on space systems for the warning, navigation, communications and meteorology'[76]. Today's systems, in particular ships' equipment, have been based on data and information derived from special-related activities.

Gray pushed over this point connecting space power and naval power, even if there was a distinction geographically and in terms of focus, they could complete each other in different ways[77]. Starting from the control and command of space, a concept that was close to naval strategy, passing through the foreign policy played throughout the control of spatial tools, in the relationship with other states or diplomatic functions in general. A connection could be found for Gray in space blockade, a practice similar to the one made, traditionally, from navies.

The author also made a suggestive prediction in which, inspiring from the evolutions of nuclear and air forces, a similar power could be reached from space. Because of its dimensional nature, that became increasingly important, he saw an implementation of joint operations also involving space weapons. His idea was that in the future space weapons could be used, in the same way as traditional one, in the course of conflicts or, more generally, introduced on the national grand strategy of future superpowers, starting with the United States of America.

---

[76] Colin S. Gray. (1994). *The Navy in the post-Cold War world. The uses and value of Strategic Sea Power*. Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania State University Press. p. 145.
[77] *Ibid.*

On this route, maybe the introduction of the cyber force could come. It is likely possible to see this type of weapon as a kind of jammer, for example during a conflict, causing problems in enemies' instrumentations. Another feature could be, during an attack, to make ships disappear from the radars to surprise the adversary. Therefore, it could constitute a possible challenge for strategic visions of the future, to also involve this field in wartime contexts.

CHAPTER 2 MILITARY OPERATIONS AT SEA

Triadic Configuration of Maritime Operations

After the Second World War, the reality of navies has changed radically. The traditional view of navies fighting other navies at sea has become generally limited. Indeed, there were no wars between ships. Therefore, the same role of the navies was revised. The capacity of this type of force was mainly oriented to a deterrence function. The reasons at the basis of this evolution can be differently described: first of all, the increased number of international organizations led to a shift of political and diplomatic relations between states, particularly relevant is the influence of the United Nations as means of promotion of pacific principles, and faster international communications. Another important element to take into consideration is the role played by nuclear weapons, especially in international relations as an instrument of deterrence[78].

Today's naval operations 'Can be categorized under three headings: "benign", "constabulary" and "military"'[79]. These three voices have something in common related to each other. Military and constabulary operations share the use force, whilst constabulary and benign have in common that their actions do not imply fighting.

The feature of this operations is the non-implication of the use of force, neither potential nor actual. From early modern periods, navies were used for famous explorations and charting of the seas, as for instance in the period of the great geographical discoveries, or in other scientific researches such as the travel of Charles Darwin on the HMS Beagle of the Royal Navy. In our nowadays' reality, ships are used for scientific discovery too, for example, they are largely employed in the Arctic Ocean. They are implied in many other functions as: 'Search and rescue operations, salvage, disaster relief and explosive ordnance disposal'[80]. All these responsibilities are really important and are related to helping other vessels in problematic situations and at the service of the entire maritime community.

The constabulary operations, that I am going to explore thoroughly in the next chapter, are considered by many authors the main role of present-day navies. They have the role to enhance law enforcement. If the laws interested are domestic, they would be principally enhanced through operations in territorial waters. Defence of international law is, whereas, encouraged with high-seas operations.

---

[78] S. Haines (2016). *War at sea: Nineteenth-century laws for twenty-first-century wars?*. In International Review of the Red Cross. p. 431.
[79]*Ivi* p. 421.
[80]*Ivi* p.422.

Domestic law enhancing functions are related merely to the area of twelve miles from the coast, the territorial seas established from the United Nations Convention on the law of the Sea (UNCLOS)[81]. Typical tasks in this sense are the respect of fisheries regulations, the protection of State's health, to illustrate respecting a state of quarantine and controlling over customs and fiscal regulations[82]. All these roles are central to fulfil the sovereignty of the state on his coasts and territorial sea. In this sense, some nations created specific agencies. Here civilians were recruited to exert these functions. To be specific, many states provided them with a coast guard to fulfil this task.

On high seas, countries exercise their sovereignty on merchant ships and other civilian vessels. Therefore, these actions are aimed at the protection of its own flagships and merchant routes from eventual attacks. Generally, operations of this type are directed against pirates, a very old problem at sea. Recently important operations were directed against piracy, directed from international and regional organizations such as the United Nations or European Union.

From the Second World War increased the state's control over its coasts and its domestic sea. This has brought an enhancement of the roles of the navies of this state's interest. Especially after the entry into force of UNCLOS, these kinds of functions were emphasized even further.

A typical constabulary operation that has become more and more important is for example economic embargo. This is really similar to the blockade, that is a military operation instead. Nevertheless, they are two very different missions in their nature and intention. The embargo has the only effect of causing economic damage to a state. Its strategic purpose is to force him in correcting a particular policy, withdrawing from a specific position or, finally, to stop violations of international law. The blockade, instead, is an act of war and is ruled from other legal bases connected with the use of force. Therefore, the economic embargo has been strengthened also from the United Nations, in line with article 41 of the UN Charter which provides the possibility to use this action as a 'Measure not involving the use of armed forces'[83].

Additional constabulary tasks could be anti-drug trafficking or securing against the commerce of weapons of mass destruction.

---

[81] Signed in 1982 after the decisions taken during the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea started in 1974. The Convention entered into force in 1994. The most important decision taken here was the division of the sea of a coastal state in different lines. There is the territorial sea, twelve miles from the coast, in which the state exercises full sovereignty. A contiguous zone, twenty-four miles from coasts, in which states exercise some fiscal rights and some other in terms of security and migration. Then, the Convention creates an exclusive economic zone that extends for two hundred miles from the coast. The latter gives to the state the possibility to exercise an exclusive right over resources and on fisheries, but nations do not exercise here full sovereignty.
[82] Haines. (2016). p.422.
[83] United Nations Charter art. 41.: 'The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.'

Military operations are traditional functions; they are described by historians and scholars as naval clashes between the maritime forces of two different countries. All types of naval operations can be clustered in three, big, categories: 'Sea control/sea denial, power projection and economic warfare'[84]. Traditionally, navies: 'Exerted their influence in war by projecting power ashore […] and by applying economic pressure on opposing belligerents through the interdiction of their trade via commerce raiding and blockade. Navies can only undertake such operations if they are sure to have sufficient control of the sea to conduct them'[85]. The aim of naval warfare is to obtain the control of the sea, employable for your own purposes against the enemy. To be specific, it can be used to invade his territory or to interfere with his commerce routes. At the same time, navies have the role of impeding an opponent's naval force to gain control of the sea and use it to create dangers to their own estates. Sea control/sea denial are contrasting concepts, a kind of opposite side of the same coin[86].

The battle of Trafalgar fought in 1805 near Cadiz, by the Royal Navy against the Spanish and the French navies showed how important it is to gain the control of the seal lines of communication and deny them to the enemy. Thanks to this important battle, described by many historians as a decisive battle of the Napoleonic Wars, Britain obtained a great advantage on his enemies because of the control of his trade routes. This was useful to impede their projection on land through naval invasion too, as British forces feared.

Major amphibious assaults has been particularly famous throughout history. Starting from the invasion of Britain in 55 B.C. by Julius Caesar or the invasion of William of Normandy called "the Conqueror" in 1066, passing through the invasion of Normandy in 1944 – Operation Overlord – till today's amphibious operations such as the invasion of Iraq in 2003. They are all instances that prove the centrality always played by amphibious operations. They are generally mentioned inside the power projection category.

During the years this type of attacks has become increasingly complex. Nowadays, missions like this imply the use of aircraft that take off from aircraft carriers – that asserted themselves during the Second World War – but also they involve the utilization of big amphibious ships to transport troops or small invasion vessels, and the launch of missiles, in particular cruise missiles, from big ships or submarines directed against particularly sensible objectives on land. Even though in the past, ships were built to fight clashes between ships, modern-day employability is more related to base functions. This means that they are principally employed as 'Powerful platform for long-range power

---

[84] Haines. (2016). p. 424.
[85] *Ivi* pp. 424-425.
[86] *Ivi* p.425.

projection'[87] from which starts the attack and where the general operation is directed, a kind of mobile command and control.

Economic Warfare operations were used in a lot of episodes from the sixteenth century to the Second World War. Today they are not so much employed because, in seventy years of history, we have had no general naval war. We have had only a few examples of the use of maritime warfare; however, their utilization has been subordinated to other forces. Economic warfare consisted, generally, in commerce-raiding operations as for instance the *guerre de course* – had been banned from the Paris Declaration of 1856 - and in blockade operations. Both had the purpose of damaging the enemy disrupting his commerce routes. In particular, they were directed against goods of contraband, considered indispensable for the opponent to continue to fight the war. These types of operations are for example regulated in the recent San Remo Manual of 1994[88].

Command of the sea

The Command of the sea was considered the main task of the navy. In particular, Corbett described control of sea communications that happened to seize enemy forces preventing the adversary from doing the same to ours[89]. In this view, it turned the light on the real importance of it, not as the command itself but as a tool employed to reach other objectives. So, it never could be '[…] the end in itself[90].

This power could be especially used to attack the enemy whenever and wherever we want, specifically, in the point in which he is more vulnerable. At the same time, however, it is important from a defensive point, because it impedes the foe to attack our coasts or to threaten us in whatever way. Many authors conceived it as an absolute word, also Mahan stressed this point when he said that it is: 'An exclusive thing: it could not be shared and was applicable to one nation at a time'[91]. Nevertheless, since the fleet needs to be so vast to control all areas of the sea/ocean, it is impossible to reach in a practical way. Furthermore, it is unfeasible because of the nature of the sea too, that spreads for kilometres and kilometres.

---

[87] *Ibid.*

[88] San Remo Manual is a comprehensive instrument of international law which includes all regulations related to armed conflict at sea. It was the product of a series of discussions held from 1988 to 1994 from many high representatives of nations and naval warfare experts. It is a document legally recognized but is not legally binding for states. It is a work of codification of customary international law that integrates other instruments of regulation of naval conflicts as the Geneva Convention of 1949 and his amendment protocol (Protocol I) of 1977.

[89] Till. (1982). p.128.

[90] *Ivi* p.133.

[91] *Ivi* p. 130.

Therefore, it is important to distinguish between a Battle Fleet that reaches the command and defends it and a Control Fleet, whose role is to patrol core areas, to escort merchant ships and to intercept enemy's commerce. The Control Fleet operates under the protection of the Battle Fleet[92]. The point is that a country needs a balanced fleet, considering that these two duties could be done only by different specialized vessels. This is not so obvious. In many occasions, in fact, countries have forgotten this differentiation. This happened, for instance during the First World War, when the Royal Navy invested too many resources in his Battle Fleet, whilst it was scarcely prepared for the protection of his commerce. As a consequence, they suffered a lot of losses caused by the German submarine's attacks.

The command of the sea is a relative concept in terms of place. It can be general or local or in the middle between the two. In particular, in wide spaces as oceans, it can be impossible to reach, for this reason, major strategies try to achieve control of some located points, called "choke points' '. Castex sustained the achievement of 'Temporary zones of control' promoting the use of a 'Particular stretch of saltwater for our own porpoises'[93]. Moreover, a distinction can be done between three dimensions of control: air, surface and submarine. Many times, it might be successful a balance between these dimensions, in the sense that you cannot reach the control of them altogether, thus you need to focus more on those on which you can assert your superiority over the enemy.

Furthermore, for the same reasons the command of the sea cannot be absolute even from a timing point of view. The adversary, in fact, would always have some possibilities to elude it.

Till suggested to avoid this concept considering that it might create confusion, bringing a more absolute conception[94]. For the same reason, we might be led to the wrong view. The risk is to think that if one loses command, his opponent gains it automatically. The practical situation, however, it's not so simple. A mistaking interpretation of the concept might bring in strategic error. It might cause potential damages as producing new foes, by menacing other neutral states, or neglecting the balance between Battle and Control Fleets, for instance concentrating too much effort on instruments that permit to achieve the command, neglecting those which allow the control.

Therefore, many authors had several problems related with this concept. Many of them refused to use it, generalizing the issue but, doing so, as a result there might be some mistake in the argumentation of the theory. Others, however, bet on new expressions as well as "control of the sea" or "maritime control" or, again, "naval mastery". Although the use of a synonym it's quite similar, it is also more imprecise. Thus, if you bear in mind the real meaning of the concept you can use the proper one, connecting it to the specific situation.

---

[92] *Ivi* p.129.
[93] *Ivi* p. 131.
[94] *Ibid.*

The command of the sea could be achieved with three different methods: decisive battle, fleet-in-being and blockade.

The decisive battle is, relatively, the easiest and most economical means, especially for a navy which can encounter stronger capabilities. It is surely quicker and safer in its success than the fleet-in-being. It has the advantage on the blockade, too: once it is successfully completed ships might be reallocated to the exercise of command. Then, many advantages came from destroying foe's vessels, in particular when issues derive from struggles with the individuation of the enemy's position in the vastity of the oceans.

This method was originally seen, not only as the most effective one but, rather, as the only means to reach the command for the sea. To be specific, Mahan was the promoter of the decisive battle and the destruction of the enemy's vessels as the only way to purchase it. This position has been criticized for many reasons. Firstly, it is not sure that defeating the adversary's fleet, or its destruction might give you a strategic advantage on him in the whole conflict. Many of the battles at sea, like Trafalgar or Leyte Gulf, were considered decisive but they did not bring to the final defeat of the enemy, although this had brought a serious advantage. Secondly, strategies, which focus too much on fights between ships, might cause a lack of preparation on other important aspects of sea warfare like the protection of economic interests or the projection of power ashore. All elements that are related to the command of the sea. Moreover, the research of the decisive battle against the enemy's fleet might be frustrating as soon as the enemy would decide, on his own way, to avoid the direct confrontation and would employ a more attendant strategy, as well as the fleet-in-being. Finally, in particular geostrategic circumstances, the maintenance of the command might be seen as more important than the annihilation of the enemy.

In the last years, the idea of direct battles for control of the sea between navies has been seen more as a remote option. There are two reasons that led to this vision: one is the length of the battle, while the other one is technological advancement. Both these elements contributed to the fact that destruction of the opponent's fleet is difficult, not only to accomplish but also to imagine. So, 'Most analysts would agree that except for possible conflict along the sea lines of communication, the days of battles on the high seas are gone forever'[95]. This idea is not completely shared by the two superpowers that struggled during the Cold War. Both in fact, as Till reported in his book, took all the measures and equipped themselves in the eventuality of the outbreak of clashes like this involving the two or in other cases. We should remember that these superpowers have many relevant sea communications under their control.

---

[95] *Ivi* p. 185.

What probably authors thought is that there will never be a battle in the style of the one fought during World Wars or before. To be specific, battles will not be fought in a parallel way, face to face, or with the use of big slow battleships[96]. The battle itself, thus, is not going to disappear but to change in its form. Battles will be fought through the use of joint forces at all dimensions: air, surface and submarine. There will be more leverage on orchestrated activities or deception, and a more pronounced position will be given to the first strike. The evolution of this type of battle will follow for example the anti-aircraft carrier armaments or might imply the use of nuclear power. Therefore, battles might be more expensive in their nature.

For what concerns the control of the sea, many authors found that this would be more difficult to achieve. It is connected to the idea that control will be shorter and tougher than ever before because of the new weapons created. An aspect to take into account is the threat coming from countries that are not industrialized, which could easily use this type of weapons to create other issues. Moreover, the progression of political and legal tools created new inhibitions and problems, such as the reduction of the possibilities, for a state, to use the sea as it was before. To be specific, there are many rules inside the framework of international law of armed conflict regarding free access and freedom of transition in particular areas like archipelagic waters or channels.

As a consequence, many authors desist from the use of the term "command of the sea", preferring the lighter "control of the sea", instead, as a total command could not be reached.

Therefore, what navies follow today is the control, limited in time and place to specific areas of the sea, that denies the passage to the enemy. This change in the word employed, seemingly ridiculous at first sight, has a really important value instead because it underlines a specific difference which is the greater difficulty of achievement. Nevertheless, Till stressed that: 'It should, though, not be taken to mean that the past experience and past reflection on 'command of the sea' are now irrelevant'[97]. The historical vision on the command of the sea, in fact, could be used to understand how to employ it in today's strategy, even if it is more complex to reach. Because: 'Although, the form of the concept may change over time (and form one country to another) its essential character will often be found to have remained, as in this case, basically the same'[98].

The command of the sea has a double nature: "sea control" or "assertion" and "sea denial". Sea control can be explained as the 'Condition that exists when one has freedom of action to use an area of the sea for one's own purposes for a period of time and, if necessary, deny its use to an opponent'[99]. It could be done for some different purposes listed by Admiral S. Turner:

---

[96] *Ivi* p.185-86.
[97] *Ivi* p. 189.
[98] *Ivi* p.190.
[99] Command of Defence Council. (1995). The Fundamentals of British Maritime Doctrine. BR1806. First Edition. London. Her Majesty Stationery Office (HMSO). p.289.

1. To ensure industrial supplies.

2. To reinforce/resupply military forces engaged overseas.

3. To provide wartime economic/military supplies to allies.

4. To provide safety for naval forces in the Projection of power ashore role[100].

We need to emphasize that sea control, however, is not important as an end itself but 'As a means to an end'[101].

   On the opposite side, in particular, for a weaker naval force, might be difficult to achieve control of the sea. So, it 'Will focus on the more limited task of denying such control to an adversary'[102]. The navy needs always to balance between sea control and sea denial: while sea control gives access also to sea denial considering that the control could not be shared, sea denial does not give you the control of the sea, that could remain disputed between the forces.

The defence of sea lines of communication is for Corbett a fundamental part of maritime strategy. This is a task acknowledged as part of the larger ensemble of the control of the sea. The western strategic culture gave few responses in this sense, whether more consideration was given from the Soviet one[103]. The relevance of the control of the routes of commerce for the western countries is actually notorious, and it is corroborated from the strategic position that NATO took from its establishment. A special focus in this sense is given to petroleum's supply lines, a very sensitive issue for the members of the North-Atlantic Alliance. They, hence, put a lot of attention on this aspect. In particular, the nuclear period was important to project a strategic vision that was the product of the connection between all forces into the game. So, it became radically important the vision of joint operations.

In the opposite part of the iron curtain, the Soviet Navy after the Second World War, with its economic growth, started to pay more attention to the protection of commerce. Even if the strategic view was pointed on military aspects, the presence of surface vessels to patrol and protect merchant ships became an ever-growing part of national interest. Many scholars suggested the integration of this idea inside the military concept, in order to be prepared in the eventuality in which an attack would be organized against the routes. In particular many scholars in the Soviet Navy, within the forefront Gorshkov's position, believed that the naval strategy had to be considered as part of the whole strategy of the country. To be specific the real need was a common strategy joined in their actions by both continental and naval power. This was quite a criticism against the position previously

---

[100] Till. (1982). p.190.

[101] *Ivi* p.192.

[102] I. Speller. (2016). *Naval Warfare*. In D. Jordan, D. J. Lonsdale, I. Speller, C. Tuck, C. D. Walton & J. D. Kiras. *Understanding Modern Warfare*. Second Edition. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. p.170.

[103] In the USSR there was the conviction that this was the product of the belief, in the endorsed idea of western countries, of their superiority on the sea.

taken, that considered superior strategic importance of the continental warfare over maritime one, mainly supported at that period. This was a deep-seated position in Soviet establishment, partly inheritance of the defeat in 1905 in the maritime war against Japan, but that needed to be renovated giving a gaze on the new world and, especially, to the new position played by USSR as a superpower.

The protection of commerce was, in the western vision, a fundamental element of countries' political view. This vision was recognized at the base of the politico-military framework that was behind the creation of the North Atlantic Organization. Specifically, I am referring to the issue of the selection and positioning of permanent bases and soldiers - or entire fleets - to control particular points, considered as the most sensible one, such as the Mediterranean base of the US Sixth Fleet. These bases are relevant to supply forces and to give support in all possible areas of collision in the fastest possible way. An eventual attack, coming for example from USSR would be fatal without a system of protection of interests like this. Furthermore, an eventual decoupling of the United States from Europe would generate the immediate fall of this latter under Soviet influence. Something terrible for the strategic vision of Washington that would lose its control over important territories of its "empire". Therefore, is particularly relevant that the preparation to avoid eventual interdiction of these communications between the continents, has to be of a high level. During the years, concerns were created inside NATO's environment following the individuation of some exercises from the Soviet Navy; apparently these exercises were intended to interdict the lines of communications. Moreover, the growing power of Soviet naval forces, during the period of the Cold War, was another significant source of awareness for western countries.

Through the evolution of the situation, the approach to the issue has changed, all over the world. The protection through the use of convoys has started to be employed again. Considering that, the number of mines could be increased[104] as well as, the attacks of enemy's forces or as submarines or aircraft forces, which are intended to stop or dominate these lines of communication. Another different approach to the issue might be the provision of weapons to merchant's vessels, for instance, defence systems or aircraft.

In this context, the role of submarines has to be underlined. However, from the Second World War a process had been started even before submarines played a relevant role in creating problems to the merchant routes. Nowadays, the navies give great importance to their consideration in pursuing this task, as they might create a critical menace to any surface or merchant fleet. Because of this, an issue became central in strategic thought. This was the emphasis paid on the ratio of submarine and anti-submarine to build. In the last years, the construction of submarines prevailed over defence

---

[104] The presence of mines, in the same way, constitutes a problem that could be solved thanks to the presence, with a patrol function, of specific vessels. Today's navies are equipped with torpedoes with special roles as anti-submarines or anti-mines specific systems that could play a significant role against this menace.

mechanisms. To be specific, this was the product of innovative technologies applied to these new vessels that increased their lethality and speed. This faced, on the other part of the fence, a stagnation of the anti-submarine's technologies which, thus, brought to an increased choice to equip with more offensive instruments. In this sense, the past objection to convoy method, that appeared as a mistake between the two world wars, might be actual in the modern strategic framework.

On the contrary, the use of convoys and their defensive instruments proved successful in many conditions. This shows the wide range of possible scenarios, and for this reason 'Would plainly be unwise to reject the experience of the past as a possible source of guidance'[105].

The fleet-in-being is a more cautious strategy, principally but not only[106], it is played by a weaker navy to overcome this inferiority. Rarely this type of strategy leads to achieving control/command on the sea despite the superiority of the opponent. However, it is more efficient in preventing the enemy control of the sea or in diminishing its possibilities of enjoying it, for example with continuous evasions. To be specific, it concerned attacks on merchant ships near the coasts or simple operation to ensure the continued survival of the weaker fleet[107]. During the Second World War, the Japanese fleet used it in a tough moment in the Pacific: fleet-in-being proved a helpful way to impede the US Navy to extend their dominion too rapidly. German Navy exerted a little leverage on this strategy, too. His inferiority on the surface against Britain was counterbalanced from a fleet-in-being made more threatening from a submarine superiority. This was a viable signal for their allies, even if it demonstrated uselessness in the end.

It is a complex strategy that is comprehensive in different situations. Circumstances characterized as Fleet-in-being has in common moderated offensive from one side and passive defence from the other. The first example of its use was in Ancient Greece and narrated in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. The specific case was related to Hermocrates' utilization of a defensive strategy to stop the more powerful Athenian fleet in the episode of the Expedition to Syracuse. Another featuring event was the one that happened to Lord Torrington's fleet against France, two thousand years later[108]. He thought to use this approach, but he was not able to do so due to orders from higher

---

[105] Till. (1982). p.198.

[106] Many times, stronger navies too were obliged to use the fleet-in-being in some particular circumstances. This was due to his spread of political and colonial interests all over the world. This assumed a large-sized and provoked vulnerable situation, maybe at the moment in which they were pursuing other operations in another dominion in a different geographic point. The problem is related to the management of defence forces and their geographical employment.

[107] Till. (1982). p.112.

[108] Torrington, admiral of the Royal Navy against France, was in an inferiority situation against the enemy off the Isle of Wight. Because of this, he thought about the use of a defensive strategy against the enemy's fleet governed by Admiral de Tourville, superior in number. He proposed to avoid the struggle against the enemy protecting the position instead and waiting for reinforcements. Nevertheless, he was not able to use this strategy because the Government ordered him to attack the enemy anyway. The case brought a total defeat for British ships and started what was called "Torrington affair". Admiral Torrington was acquitted by Martial Court, but he was not employed at sea again. This case was explored years after. Philip Colomb himself tried to rehabilitate his reputation and defend his strategic choice.

grades. This episode is important because for the first time was coined the term "Fleet-in-being". Furthermore, Corbett defended this kind of strategy too, underlining his success in many episodes of the Seven Years War (1756-63). In this case, he brought examples of the successful use made by France against Britain. He, moreover, criticized who laughed at this strategy because it might not be used to obtain the command of the sea, though it could be used to prevent the enemy from doing the same[109]. An important element to bear in mind was, for Corbett, that the use of this approach was for a higher purpose than the mere stay alive. As a consequence, it should not be passive because it could imply a demoralization of sailors.

The last strategy, blockade, consist in the positioning of the own naval force around the coast and stop enemy ships, meanwhile other vessels exert control of sea communications. It might be used as a response to the Fleet-in-being. This strategy proved more effective than other ones, however, it often led to conflicts.

In Section II, "Methods of Warfare", of San Remo Manual on International Law Applicable to Armed Conflicts at Sea of 1994, the blockade has to be:

93. A blockade shall be declared and notified to all belligerents and neutral States.

94. The declaration shall specify the commencement, duration, location, and extent of the blockade and the period within which vessels of neutral States may leave the blockaded coastline.

95. A blockade must be effective. The question of whether a blockade is effective is a question of fact.

96. The force maintaining the blockade may be stationed at a distance determined by military requirements.

98. Merchant vessels believed on reasonable grounds to be breaching a blockade may be captured. Merchant vessels which, after prior warning, clearly resist capture may be attacked[110].

It could be easily confused with an economic blockade, which aims to cut off the enemy's trade or essential resources. Moreover, vessels used in these strategies could be the same, at the same time and place. The military blockade has the aim to prevent enemy ships to stop communications or impede the effective use of the command of the sea. After the blockading line, the country and his remaining vessels could exercise the command as they want. This strategy was seen by Mahan as important both to exercise command of the sea and to protect his own interests, for example of the economic sort. This was, to be specific, used from the Royal Navy during the French Revolution to

---

[109] Till. (1982). p. 114.
[110] International Institute of Humanitarian Law. San Remo Manual on International Law Applicable to Armed Conflicts at Sea (1994), Section II, Methods of Warfare, p.16.

protect its country from eventual attacks from revolutionary forces. Another case of use of a blockade was during the First World War, after the battle of Jutland of 1916 when the Royal Navy used it against German fleet. This had relevant consequences both defensively and offensively. From a defensive point of view, it was useful to protect British islands, dominions and interests all over the world. From the offensive perspective, it was successful for the disruption of German commerce and the economic weakening of the enemy.

The institution of a blockading formation might have relevant effects for different reasons. The most fundamental one is about the detection of the enemy position, hence, obtaining an incredible advantage over him. The effect of a blockade and his nature, however, could be different depending on the way they are placed. Generally, it is distinguished between a "distant" or "open" and a "close" blockade. Both these have different advantages and disadvantages. The distinctions are related to 'Whether these squadrons replenished on the station; another, pointed out by Corbett, was the degree of 'certainty of immediate contact' when the enemy went out'[111].

A "distant" blockade was pursued by the Royal Navy in the eighteenth century against the French Navy. It was achieved through small fast ships, mostly cruisers, that patrolled important ports and looked after the position of the enemy. This had two advantages: economic benefits from the employment of only a limited part of the forces and strategic profit because the adversary can understand that the area is patrolled and, instinctively, challenging him to come out and fight face to face against your superior force. The disadvantage is that it could not have the same results as the other type of blockade, it was easier to elude.

The close blockade, instead, was more aggressive and prevented the opponent's vessels from coming out and fighting or commerce. It was effective also from a defensive point because it avoided eventual attacks against the country or, generally, estates. It is possible to be attacked from single riders and, for this reason, it is necessary to deploy a defensive formation behind the first line. Nevertheless, the close blockade reduces threats, despite these attacks. The disadvantage of the close blockade is that it needs a marked superiority of ships at sea, that Corbett identified as from 25 to 33%, and a great request for personnel and support services[112]. Furthermore, it could give to a passive Fleet-in-being more strategic effectiveness, for example giving the opportunity to damage or destroy some ships of the first line or, anyway, to reduce its effectiveness using torpedoes or mines or, again, submarines – as shown for instance during the First World War. The technological progress brought to the implementation of a lot of weapons that could be used to damage the blockading ships and force them to retire.

---

[111] Till. (1982). p.122.
[112] *Ivi* p.125.

During the years the blockade strategy became more complex integrating with other forms and other fleet's activities. They became multi-dimensional too, by adding airpower with the role of detection or destruction of ships in both sides of blockade lines[113]. Moreover, during World War II and in the years after, the new technological advancements gave superior fleets more elasticity in defence of interests and fewer threats to their ships. The menaces were, thus, more than that resulted after the whole destruction of the adversary's force. The importance of blockading strategies is perceived in particular from western countries. NATO, in particular, prepared different possible solutions to overcome the evolution of defence of blockade. Two new types of approach could be individuated: the so-called "Sortie blockade" and the "Chokepoints control". The first one, principally, leverages the use of mines and submarines, it consists in the destruction of opponent's ships when they come out of ports or bases, impeding them to overcome some particular area. The second one is about strictly controlling areas or points in which the enemy needs to pass through. Here you can use 'Units which would not survive for long in sortie control operations nearer the enemy bases'[114]. Although the technological progress brought new equipment and weapons, navies are facing some of the problems of the past, as well as weather conditions. So, 'New navies seem to have old problems'[115].

We need to precise that many times the command of the sea comes from the strict control of the land and not vice versa. So, these two elements could be related. Furthermore, another element to bear in mind is the fact that command of the sea operations might be not the only one pursued. We could aspire to accomplish a second task in the meantime, indeed. This could be a risky strategy, and many authors, for this reason, criticized it, but many times it revealed success. Of course, the accomplishment of two tasks at the same moment, such as the command of the sea and projection ashore, could be possible only for maritime forces that can claim a visible superiority over the foe. Generally, this line was agreed from the majority of the authors. Mahan, for example, considered this a rule arguing that 'Major operation of war across sea should not be attempted unless naval superiority for an adequate period is probable'[116].

German fleet, at the beginning of the Second World War, tried this type of strategy against Norway in the North Sea. This had success because of the surprise effect. However, this approach is considered very risky. Corbett opposed the use of surprise to project power ashore[117] because amphibious operations without a secure command of the sea are very hazardous. The nature of such an operation is really vulnerable. They are easily counter-attackable, indeed.

---

[113] *Ivi* p.128.
[114] *Ivi* p. 187.
[115] *Ivi* p.188.
[116] *Ivi* p.137.
[117] *Ibid.*

The command of the sea showed central to defend the commerce or, on the other side, to attack and weaken that one of the opponents. It was quite a precondition to start these operations and focus on the impoverishment of the enemy to bend him to negotiations. Moreover, this attaches to the idea of merchant warfare, too. Invoked in France from the *Jeune Ecole*[118] to evade from the inferiority shown against the Royal Navy, it proved meaningless without, at least, a low level of command of the sea. In conclusion, the importance of the command of the sea is not in his nature itself, rather in the consequences brought from its achieving. Thanks to it, in fact, states are allowed to do whatever they want with the area under their control. Some cases could be the creation of new dominions in the colonies as Portuguese did in Modern ages, and as Dutch and British did a few centuries after. An example was given by the Japanese in the Second World War. Immediately after Pearl Harbor, they obtained an advantage from the interdiction of the United Kingdom and the United States to build their dominion in the Pacific and, especially, in South-East Asia. Subsequently, the allies took control of the Pacific again in a series of struggles. Through the command of the sea, they were able to damage Japan in three different ways: through the invasion of home islands, through bombardments of cities and factories, testing the resilience level of the Japanese population, and, finally, through a blockade that permitted to cut off supply lines of goods and resources that were fundamental to continue fighting. So, because of the command of the sea, allies had the opportunity to force the enemy to surrender.

The Exercise of Control

What I stressed in the last paragraph was the relevance of the command of the sea as the most important task of the navies. The relevance of it, I mentioned, is not given by the control itself in its nature but is related to the use, as a means to an end. As a result, the relevance of this task is related to his exercise. There are some different ways to exercise the command: the projection of power ashore or invasion of the territory of the enemy, the protection of the land and both attack and defence of sea lines of communication.

With respect to the projection of power, it could be called in different ways, but its meaning does not change. This feature contains different types of missions 'They vary considerably in terms of purpose, effort and income on the outcome of the war'[119]. We can distinguish between a wide mission of invasion with the aim to conquer the whole territory or some portions of it, otherwise, there could be small rides or bombardments of the adversary's soil.

---

[118] Mentioned before.
[119] Till. (1982). p.140.

These operations are recognized as the most ambitious ones, in fact, they are relatively successful, from a strategic point of view, in terms of victory of the entire conflict. The difference between operations against the shore and the one that saw two fleets facing each other is about the effect that they could have in terms of the final result. To be specific, the war ends only with the conquest of enemy territory, so strategically the result of a successful invasion is more pronounced than the one of a decisive victory at sea, which effect could not reverse immediately on the ground warfare. The effectiveness of an invasion itself could not bring to the final victory. After this operation, the naval forces have to manage in the best way possible the situation and his influence to have success. Projections ashore, anyway, could have a radical impact on the morale of the enemy, who could be forced to surrender.

Many contested the relevance of these missions, like the geopolitical school. They argued that 'Seapower would be unable to defeat land power, even if it did try to come ashore'[120]. This element was confirmed from some historical examples like the American War of Independence in which Britain showed all his difficulties to address war, far from home and in the difficult territory, even with the superiority at sea. Another example could be the famous battle of Trafalgar that showed that even winning a relevant strategic struggle at sea does not immediately give superiority in ground warfare.

The future situation will be more complex than it was before, but also the Second World War showed the fundamental role of navies for the final victory. As a consequence, projection ashore will continue in the future may be in different forms, especially in the form of joint operations. In a war between a continental country, as Nazi Germany during the Second World War, the problem of projection of naval power ashore has been posed from the allies. What was not questioned at the time was the relevance of this type of actions. Only thanks to these operations it would be possible to take some advantages in land warfare. The role of the ships in supporting of the troops is crucial. It can also take two other forms: sea bases or supply lines and logistic support.

Furthermore, another element that should not be underestimated is the diverse potentiality of assaults from the sea. Corbett gave a lot of space to this task, considering it as a method that creates difficulties for the enemy or to strengthen the position of the allies. These fake assaults have the advantage to be less risky, and less expensive than invasions and give a strategic advantage lighting the position of opponent forces in another area, giving the possibility to attack more successfully, especially for allies.

Another possibility might be the director of operations against vulnerable points of the enemy, as dominions or colonies, in which invasions might be more effective. For many authors this was one

---

[120] *Ivi* p.141.

of the features that helped an insular territory, such as the United Kingdom, to gain a remarkable success by creating his own Empire. His maritime capacity gave the ability to focus on the conquest of far but rich dominions that gave an economic advantage against his enemies. The wealth of the nation increased after having torn colonies from the enemy hands. On the other side, it undermined the foe from resources and from bases, both relevant for military and merchant tasks. Projections ashore or bombardments might have other minor purposes such as seizing places useful during the negotiations or striking the opponents' morale and forcing them to negotiate the end of the conflict. Amphibious operations, then, started generally with naval purposes. The main idea of this kind of operation is that through this approach it might be conquered, disabled or destroyed naval bases, or prevent the enemy from getting one. In the specific case of the Royal Navy, during the eighteenth-century amphibious operations had the main purpose to divert the enemy. The foe, who was subjected to the attack, had to repair reinforcing its position on land, thus abandoning his defence of the sea. This was a witty strategy of Britain that, thanks to this use could maintain its naval superiority and then taking advantage of this. In Corbett's vision, another possible implication of this type of mission could be to force the enemy to leave its defensive strategy near its coasts, for example, a Fleet-in-being, to approach a more offensive approach in a decisive battle, fleet against the fleet.

Projection ashore operations, even though important for the success in war, are very risky operations and difficult to carry on. In this sense, it is central, again, the concept of the control of the sea. This is a precondition for the success of this kind of operation. The control of an area, near the direction of the attacks, ensures more protection to ships involved in this function. Furthermore, it permits the presence of a squadron of transport, on their back, to protect them from a series of threats to the effectiveness of the entire mission. Strategically important is to divide the two tasks, attack and ships' transport, and give both autonomous functions. As a consequence, many authors thought that each task could be pursued in a better way and, then, they could integrate with each other.

The projection ashore operations, and in particular amphibious one, need a high level of preparation in each sector: attacking, transporting and supplying. The success of this type of mission depends on the proficiency of the troops, nothing, of course, could be improvised. The history taught that many of these operations failed because of the lack of preparation or of necessary means to prosecute it. Specifically, what to take into account was the shipping that had to be adequate to transport troops, the proper number of bombarding vessels, a sufficient preparation to landing operations in specific maps or charts and, finally, a knowledge of the climate[121].

Another specific aspect to bear in mind is the cooperation between sea and land forces. In particular, it should be clear the aim of both soldiers and officers. Only in this way they can operate properly

---

[121] *Ivi* p.145.

and have success. Moreover, the organization and training are a vital element for an operation that, in its nature, needs to be fast and requires the use of the element of surprise. An element to take into account is the maintenance of order and calmness throughout the conflict. Nevertheless, during history, we have many examples of failed amphibious operations that can explain the fragility of the nature of this kind of mission. For instance, the expedition of Dardanelles in 1915, during the First World War, a smudge in the carrier of Winston L. S. Churchill. This episode was central because it influenced the strategic thought over the years between the world wars. The operation in 1915 proved a complete disaster, especially in the way it was organized. The foe, indeed, had the time to anticipate the moves of the Triple Entente preparing his troops to reject the invasion. The features of this mission, that revealed disastrous and made it fail clamorously, were the lack of speed and surprise of the forces that permitted the enemy to shore up its defensive position. This failure, with another less important one, occurred in the Eastern front, helped to spread the idea of the riskiness and difficulty to organize and put into force these missions. The fear was fostered by the presence of new technologies, aircraft, submarines and mines, that were influencing the strategic thought of the period. Their vision was that thanks to the presence of these new weapon systems, amphibious operations remained a remote option. Many proposed, instead, the option of a vis-à-vis attack.

The vision changed during World War II when amphibious operations were used in many situations. Historic researches reported that, during the war, more or less six hundred invasions have been made. For example, the invasion of Norway, the Japanese invasions of Philippines, to which are added allied invasions in the war of the Pacific, as well as those in Europe as in Sicily or in Normandy.

This change of mind in World War Second was the product of a variety of reasons. In particular, the 'Strategic circumstances of war, which separated many of the adversaries by expanses of water' or '[…] also the new technology of naval assault seemed to enable the sea-borne attacker to pose a much more substantial threat than ever before to the land defender'[122]. In particular, the role of the new aircraft permitted, as Nimitz said, an increasing level of flexibility, range and power. It showed the ability of the navies that, thanks to aircraft carriers, they could concentrate all their firepower on a specific area in a specific moment, causing difficulties to the enemy. Furthermore, they demonstrated an excellent capacity to use principles of mobility and concentration that no other force, alone, had.

Projection of power ashore was a possibility for both superpowers during the Cold War. Admiral S. Turner produced a spectrum of projection, partly mirrored from Soviet naval doctrine, in which 'Ranged from 'nuclear strike' at one extreme to 'preventive presence' in the other'. Intermediate stages were: 'Tactical air, naval bombardment, amphibious assault and reactive presence'[123]. NATO

---

[122] *Ivi* p. 146.
[123] *Ivi* p.198.

configurations the concept of projection ashore as operations of attacking an enemy's territory, bombarding naval forces or port installations, and enhancing land forces to achieve their objectives. Nevertheless, during the years the evolution of the situation brought more difficulties for this kind of operations, especially restrictions of a political and military nature. To be specific, right of way has eroded the possibility for projecting power ashore. Another problem is related to costs, political and economic, of these missions that increased during the years. Facing this condition, many authors are keen to say that a sensible reduction of the employment of forces in this way will happen in the future.

From a military point of view, discussions were held about the role of the US Marine Corps. After the Second World War, in fact, the idea was that there were lots of difficulties in protracting this kind of operations against an enemy that had nuclear weapons and would use it easily to destroy a concentration of ships and men. Moreover, another threat comes from 'Spread land-based munitions amongst smaller states' and 'Growing mechanization of world's armies'[124] that increases the troubles to the success of this approaches in particular for countries who need to specialize in both land and sea power, compared to one who can concentrate in only one of them. This progress in technology, to be specific, led to a lack of surprise and of the ability to concentrate all forces in one point, in fact, the opponent's forces are now able to cover the defensive position in a faster way. In consequence of this, US Marines changed their position, especially in these years, acting increasingly as ground forces to impede that their corps was cancelled[125].

The expedition of Guam showed, with half of the total number of helicopters destroyed from land forces, that amphibious operations have become really hazardous. In particular, it proved the costs of these operations. In the same way scepticism about amphibious operations has risen. This could have an impact not only on amphibious operations themselves but also on the entire maritime power, that could be globally weakened because of the key role played from these operations.

'Despite such doubts in the nuclear age, the navies have continued to stress the projection role'[126]. Nowadays, their inclination is to obtain new torpedoes and aircraft carriers, which remains the most important piece of the puzzle of modern navies, and new amphibious ships. The latter became bigger and capable of transporting troops, smaller vessels and also some aircraft. their role is centred, not only in landing troops, but to support them during the entire operations through bombardments, too. The role of these ships in bombardments from the sea of the enemy's crucial points increased in their importance. The relevance was shown already from the operations in Korea and Vietnam, and it

---

[124] *Ivi* p.199.
[125] For the same reason, we saw Marines in recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan operations facing the same role of the army. This is an important evolution of the strategic view inside the Pentagon.
[126] Till. (1982). p.200.

moved toward a growth during the years until today's operations as, for instance, happened in Libya in 2011.

In the past, these operations had the task also to ensure their control of the sea. This role remains also today, it could be used for example to invade specific areas to protect the sea communications or to impede the enemy to take control of it seizing important commercial routes for national interests. This was a strategy used during the Second World War, precisely during the conflict for the dominance of the Pacific against Japanese forces.

The importance of the operations of power projection was understood also from the other superpower too, which spread his vision to this issue, commonly seen as an interest of the Western countries. In particular with the advent of Gorshkov, it was seen the relevance of the use of these missions, first of all, to protect the territory, as traditionally the Navy had to do but, more broadly, also from an offensive vision to attack enemy possessions and commerce routes. In particular the building in 1979 of the 13 thousand tons amphibious warfare ship *Ivan Rogov* and the building in 1991 - operative from 1995 - of the 60 thousand tons aircraft carrier[127] *Admiral Flota Sovetskogo Soyuza Kuznetsov*, seems to imply a growing interest in land-directed operations.

In general, although ships were equipped with new offensive technologies, there were doubts about the feasibility and on riskiness related to projection ashore operations persisting[128]. Even if, however, these missions are more expensive than it was in the past because of all the technologies implied, they survived in actual naval strategy with sufficient continuities from the past.

Another role of the navy is to exercise the command of the defence of the land. This task was contested at the end of the nineteenth century in Britain between land and sea forces. Both collided to take the primacy in this task: the Army affirmed that the enemy, to make more damages to the nation, needed to attack the land and for this reason, this task belonged to them. On the other side, the Royal Navy defended his positions saying that to reach their coasts the foe had to pass through the sea. For this reason, a stronger navy with a wide control of defensive lines could prevent every attack of the opponent coming from the sea. Thanks to the command of the sea a navy knows when the enemy is coming forward and could avoid an invasion attacking their ships.

The role to protect the country was, from the 1920s and after the Revolution, the main task of the Soviet Navy. The one recognized as the traditional duty of the navy together with the support of the landing troops, especially preventing the attacks of submarines or dangers created from mines.

The nature of the defence of a country is not made by a static strategy. It could use three different lines with different ends to protect the nation. In particular, the use of the battleships could be to

---

[127] Heavy aircraft cruiser in Russian classification.
[128] Till. (1982). p.202.

patrol the sea or control enemy lines of communications avoiding an attack or forcing him to surrender. In general, the role is to stop first of all transport ships that could not reach the country. Another role could be more static in front of the coasts, employed to reject eventual raids that pass between the holes in the first dynamic line of defence created by patrolling vessels. The third line plays a key role as the last stand. Here comes the possible implication of land forces joined with another line of ships to prevent the enemy from going through and penetrating the country.

The vision of the 'Orthodox maritime strategists - explains Till - believed that the obvious implication of all this was the Navy should be regarded as the 'wooden walls of England' – the prime means of defence for this or any other maritime nation'[129].

The third task of navies, exercising sea control, is the attack or defence of maritime communications. This role has always been central and Mahan, for this reason, stated that communications are needed to have success in conflict[130]. It was shown in particular during the two world wars, actually 'Activities against, or in support of, the ability to use the sea as a means of transportation of men and goods have always been a considerable feature of naval conflict'[131]. The lines of communications, central to the passage of vital resources or supplies, have been always taken as a target of the enemy. This happened in particular when the goal was the weakening of the opponent's economy. Amphibious operations against enemy domains had many times this purpose.

Most maritime activities are related to one another and, as a result, attack on maritime communications will be taken to cover blockade operations or the disruption of the enemy's supply lines.

On the contrary, the *guerre de course* is completely different. In particular, they are not directed to a specific area you want to conquer but on a few merchant's vessels damaging the enemy only from an economic point of view. Another substantial divergence comes from the subject who carries out this type of operation. In this sense, they are particularly common for weaker navies that are not able to face the enemy in a vis-à-vis confrontation, which they are sure to lose, and because of this, they use widely this fast raid against the opponent's merchant ships forcing his retreat. In particular, a possible effect of the *guerre de course* could be 'To force its victims to cut back on certain commercial activities, allowing neutrals to take over his place and so injuring his long-term trading prospects'[132]. Therefore, it could produce a reduction of the revenue and the credit available from running the battle. The enemy, hence, even if stronger in his naval capability, could be forced to withdraw or end the war.

---

[129] *Ivi* p.150.
[130] *Ivi* p.155.
[131] *Ivi* p.150.
[132] *Ivi* p.151.

This practice, however, was widely criticized by many authors, starting with Mahan and Corbett. Their view was characterized by the use of this strategy, especially from weaker navies. Their idea was that *guerre de course* was not able to bring itself the final victory. The reason why they thought about this regard the importance, in their view, of the command of the sea as the major task for navies. In fact, an approach as this, without the control of the sea, concerning only the use of few raids could not bring victory in war. It was proven during the First World War, the German submarine warfare, though successful, it was not enough to win. This strategy failed because of the lack of a strong surface force in support of the raids of the submarine, with the power to obtain such control of the sea. This vision was resumed from Gorshkov in his analysis of the Second World War, always taking German submarines as an example. Furthermore, the *guerre de course* was criticized because of its nature too. These fast raids against foe's merchant ships, in fact, were considered barbaric and dishonourable in their execution as well.

The *guerre de course* was seen by Mahan and Corbett as always inferior and less effective than every traditional maritime strategy. In some cases, in which this had success, it was because the blockading forces put all the effort in containing enemy lines and not in protecting their commerce routes. Otherwise, they suggested that only an actual economic blockade could damage the commerce of the enemy in an effective way.

This appeared obvious, again, in the struggle between Britain and Germany during World War I when the commercial blockade carried out by the Royal Navy was successful in cutting down the supply lines of his opponent. Because of this 'Germany's import and export trade with the outside world […] by 1918, it had fallen to one-seventh of what it had been in 1913'[133]. This led Germany into a horrible economic situation and problems of starvation spread among the population. Nevertheless, it is not certain that the hunger of German population was caused by the commercial blockade, because many thought it was led from the shortage of men for agriculture due to their implication in the war; commercial blockade could be of course an excellent method to damage the enemy's economy.

It was underlined that the success of a proper commercial blockade could be brought from the presence of some factors as well as: the dependence of the country from commerce and external supplies, the ability to provide home-made substitutes, the extent in which the blockade could exploit geography or the extension of war[134]. If there is the presence of these factors, the commercial blockade will be a successful strategy.

Nevertheless, technological advancement made states more dependent on overseas supplies, and this could be taken into consideration as an element of weakness for nations who are not capable of

---

[133] *Ivi* p. 154.
[134] *Ibid.*

protecting their lines of communication. Moreover, new weapons, like submarines and aircraft, increased the lethality of raids at sea as the *guerre de course*, giving to this strategy a way to increase marginal success and possible implications for future maritime conflicts.

The operations of attacking enemy communications could be the means to another end, too. For instance, it could be a way to defend one's own or it could be a precondition to fight wars in distant places. It could also be the only way to provoke a reluctant enemy into a decisive battle at sea. Of course, however, the comprehensive success depends on the effectiveness and readiness of other tasks.

Regarding the protection of commerce, Till sees it as 'A multi-dimensional activity'[135] especially considering that defence of maritime communication is not only a matter of peace but of war, as well. An aspect that is often forgotten. Mahan, for instance, was criticized for the same reason from other authors. From his point of view, in fact, an effective blockade was able to stop all enemy's vessels preventing menaces for allied merchant ships behind the blockading line. This proved, however, a mistaking consideration when, during the First World War, Germany and its submarines were able to seize British merchant ships behind the blockade lines, precisely because the Royal Navy put all his effort in the Battle Fleet. This approach left merchant ships without any protection at the mercy of U-boats. A situation which could be even more traumatic if Germany would have had a stronger surface fleet that could give support to his submarine's operations. Every offensive strategy, hence, has to take into account aspects concerning commercial routes.

Another effective way to protect commerce is between through building of a working command, a peculiar British strategy. This could be more effective than separate and more autonomous operations, as the patrol of single areas. The working command could organize the information and the entire mission in a more concerted way. This defensive strategy is based on the obtainment of the command of the sea or the control of specific areas from which operations could be directed.

Another type of strategy possible in the protection of merchant ships is the use of patrolling vessels in specific areas in which merchant ships are used to pass through in their travels. Here there is the largest possibility that enemy cruisers will attack merchant's vessels and so, protecting these areas, might constitute a solution to prevent attacks. Unfortunately, patrol strategy, used from the majority of navies, showed his limits during the two world wars, and for this reason, it was abandoned. In particular, the deficit of patrolling only specific areas is that if the opponent attacks in open seas, as happened for U-boats during the First and the Second World War against British and US merchant ships, patrolling vessels are not capable to protect commerce or to find enemy ships responsible for this attack. The problem here was related to two aspects: from one side the idea that hunting groups

---

[135] *Ivi* p.156.

and patrols were better because of their offensive nature. On the other side, the conviction that specific sea areas could be protected as streets. This was a mistaking vision in its nature because the last are really different from sea lines of communication. While streets could be defended, the areas could not be completely dominated. The protection has to be directed, therefore, specifically on merchant ships and not on the areas or on the lines of communication.

The negative point of this mistaking vision was that they brought a considerable rejection for another type of protection which was the one of convoys. This defensive approach was effective in the way in which it granted the protection of merchant's vessels by raising his possibilities to escape from attacks and deliver the cargo. The second point in favour of this strategy is the higher possibility to find and stop eventual commercial riders, neutralizing the threat though temporarily. Mahan endorsed the strategy of convoys to protect commerce. He thought that convoys, if they are well organized, are the best way to protect merchant ships and, at the same time, to reduce the threat of enemy's raiding ships.

This concept is important also in today's navies. The method of convoys was used for instance during the Iran- Iraq war (1980-88) to face the issue of the so-called "Tanker War" for many western countries, starting with the United States. In this contest Iran ships started to attack western cargo ships, full of Iraqis petroleum, to create economic damage to his opponent. The response of the interested countries, that saw important national interest involved, was to send convoy operations in the area to protect their cargo ships from eventual attacks. Another recent case is the operation Ocean Shield carried on by NATO from 2008. Here convoys were organized to protect ships transporting humanitarian aid from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, against attacks by Somalian pirates.

Economic Warfare at Sea

Economic warfare became a really important part of the maritime strategy in particular during the seventeenth and eighteenth century, in the period in which there was a colonial rivalry between Britain and France. In this phase, a normative regime was created to regulate these conflicts. The rules 'Allowed belligerents to target each other's trade while at the same time respecting that of neutrals'[136]. The product of this era was the creation of the figure of the "neutral" in naval warfare. Other norms were enacted to regulate the practice of blockade and, relatively to this praxis, also the provisions for search and visit ships, both enemies and neutrals', to check for contraband[137]. All private and not-contraband goods, as well as neutral trade, can pass in every situation. Ships who try

---

[136] Haines. (2016). p.436.
[137] All goods that contribute to foe's war effort.

to evade from visits or try to force a blockade could be stopped also using the force, and often sunk, with the division of the goods transported as "spoils of war". In the Paris Declaration of 1856 'The methods of economic warfare achieved recognition in conventional law' - and - '[…] forms the basis of the current international law'[138], in particular regarding commerce and blockade operations. During the First World War then, there was a struggle between officers of the Royal Navy and important businessmen regarding the reform of these rules. To be specific, from a military point of view norms had to remain the same as before because commerce was easier to control. On the other side, however, traders' representatives advanced ideas of completely free shipping routes, a sort of free trade.

After the Second World War until the end of the Cold War, both alignments considered the protection of sea lines of communication from eventual attacks of the enemy. NATO organized sea lines of communication in the north part of the Atlantic Ocean that was fundamental to link the United States to western countries, their allies. On the other side of the iron curtain, USSR prepared defensive strategies to protect his commerce, including convoy's operations in areas considered vital for national interests.

At the end of the Cold War, there was no particular offensive strategy relating to economic warfare. This is noticeable in the British Maritime Doctrine (BR 1806)[139]. In the first edition, economic warfare is linked to "Operations against Enemy Forces", 'Although the volume contains no substantial treatment of economic warfare'[140]. In the following editions, economic warfare is not mentioned. Therefore, as Haines said: 'There has been no revival of economic warfare in RN - Royal Navy- a doctrine in the years since, the dominant role of navies now is power projection'[141].

Economic warfare actually could happen, in spite of this fact. Notwithstanding the creation of international norms regulating this case, they are not so effectful to judge all possible circumstances in today's evolved condition. An old legal system, in fact, is not capable of understanding the evolution of commerce that became the artery of our economic wealthiness. Even if a moral and political condemnation could happen in an international tribunal, this might not be sufficient to prevent new cases of economic warfare.

In the eventuality, it could be more difficult, in the way cargoes are transported, to tell between neutral or foe's ships. To be specific, the evolution concerns the international commercial shipping industry and the way in which goods are shipped at a global level, this is a consequence of the phenomenon of globalization. Therefore, cargoes could contain goods destined to other countries. It has erected a more complex world in which older laws, hardly, could adapt. In particular, norms regarding the

---

[138] Haines. (2016). p.436.
[139] Three editions: first edition of 1995, second edition of 1999 and third edition of 2004.
[140] Haines. (2016). p.437.
[141] *Ibid.*

neutral status are no more applicable in the same way as it was before when the majority of commerce belonged to a great power, which controls sea lines of communications.

Another issue is linked to the number of ships. In these years, we saw the increasing numbers of merchant's vessels that quadrupled in fifty years, whilst military ships did not grow in number, and some navies, actually, reduced their capacities. The Royal Navy, for instance, since 1970 'Reduced to a quarter of its then size'[142].

Because of this, original strategies in the protection of merchant ships, as well as convoys, are not practicable in the same way as before. They could not be deployed all over the world or protect every single ship. Therefore, today an effective defensive strategy in this sense is impossible to mount and so strategic decisions have to bear in mind this aspect.

Another element to take into account is the one related to search and visit tasks. Nowadays, it is impossible to do in a successful way because cargos are transported from big ships in containers which are closed. The master of the ship himself does not know what is on his vessel. The search of goods by boarding is no longer possible. This could happen only with computers in which are registered all the items transported from the ship. For this reason, rules concerning search and visit, or contraband have become unsuitable in an eventual economic war.

In conclusion, because the majority of the rules concerning economic warfare became unsuitable, all international systems could pass as outdated, and for this reason, the whole set of rules should be reviewed.

In the most recent period, issues connected to economic warfare have arisen in the transportation of petroleum in the Indian Ocean, especially those through the Strait of Hormuz. This brought countries with particular interests in the area, in particular of an economic nature, to send navies to protect their ships from eventual attacks. This was followed by an increasing presence and the signature of agreements for the building of permanent naval bases in the region, in particular from the United States' and United Kingdom's government. Here particular issues have sprung up, from the period of Iran-Iraq War (1980-88), because of the presence of the Iranian's Islamic Revolutionary Guardian Corps, which have conducted operations against tankers. In 2019, for instance, the British-flagged *Stena Impero* tanker was seized from Iranian forces near the Strait of Hormuz, generating a diplomatic tension between London and Teheran.

---

[142] *Ivi* p.439.

Despite the decreasing risk of a war between two fleets or an economic warfare, it is considered that it will continue in some other form. Following the Cold War, the situation changed with the entry of new international, non-states, actors in the global scenario. This new kind of stakeholders raised new challenges from a legal and a military perspective. While, in general, conflicts between two countries are decreased, on the other side international conflicts, implying new players, raised in number. There is only one example of war at sea between navies and non-state actors. In Sri Lanka, during the civil war (1983-2009), the country was challenged at sea by a non-state player, the Tamil Tigers, challenged. This rare event of international battles at sea involving non-state actors, despite their rising influence in international relations, is related to the fact that it is more difficult and expensive for an international actor to equip with his own naval power, and to start a war against his government. It is a matter of resources. Nevertheless, we do not have to consider ground and sea as completely detached dimensions. During history, in fact, sea warfare was used many times to end issues that were born on land.

Conflicts between states and non-state actors, as in this case, increased in importance because of the use of particular methods to face the more powerful military capabilities of a state actor. Non-state players started using low-intensity forms of conflict. Some examples were insurgency or terrorism or criminal organizations. These strategies, as Haines described it, were: 'Asymmetric, hybrid and mixed forms of conflict involving methods that are difficult to combat, employed by forces whose identity can be profoundly ambiguous'[143].

Going thoroughly into this definition of the problem, it is connected with the distinction of people involved or not in the conflict. In this kind of war, it became really difficult to distinguish civilians and fighters. This latter could, in fact, take advantage of the chaotic situation and hide themselves behind common people, maybe threatening their lives. It makes this kind of conflict really complex to fight and to solve, especially finding the proper strategic answer.

Furthermore, there are paradigmatic dimensions between military and constabulary, so the laws to apply in this situation could be confused, too.

Such problems of this kind are posed in anti-piracy operations. Here there is the shared responsibility of some organizations of states, as happened for example in Somalia, in which there is not an officially recognized organization. The state, in fact, collapsed in 1992. The menace comes from a former seaman that became pirates. The approaches are challenged from the difficulty to understand to whom crafts belonged to. Therefore, the only possibility was to respond to attack and not to use a preventive

---

[143] *Ivi* p. 441.

strike, apart from some specific situation, and this could be imitating forces in their job. Shipping companies, hence, contracted private security companies to protect their interests against pirates' boardings as a reaction to the lack of: 'Use of legitimate force at sea in constabulary operations, where the principles of self-defence allow for necessary and proportionate force'[144]. So, this phenomenon brought to the fragmentation of the defensive response and of the laws applied.

In the Paris Declaration of 1856, the navies had the monopoly of the legitimate application of force during armed conflicts. Nevertheless, doctrine evolved, and constabulary operations were attributed to other types of forces. Many states, in fact, created Coast Guard's corps to manage these issues. Some confusion was caused by the partition of duties between coast guards and navies, especially for what concerns conflicts of high or low intensity. The regulatory body concerning constabulary issues is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982.

Furthermore, the situation was complicated from the fact that many states used other forces aside to form their coast guards. In some reality, there are 'Also quasi-official militia" forces operating in coastal waters'[145]. The example that could be done, that I have already mentioned before, is the one of the "Navy of the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution" in Iran, whose legal status is not clear.

This creates a problem inside national governments and, more in general, inside the international community, about the laws to apply and circa the sense of constabulary and military operation. The problem to solve today, besides the creation of a renewed regulatory body, is about the need to maintain division or to incorporate in a unique body, constabulary and military duties. Then another issue, seeing them as two different matters, arise about the respective allocation of tasks.

Naval diplomacy is a relatively new task for navies, they are activities with a less dangerous purpose and could be used to influence the behaviour of another state. This influence could have various targets: from persuading the enemy not to attack, or to force his hand in a negotiation, to normal diplomatic activities. This, of course, needs a lot of preparation because they could have a negative impact on the situation, decreasing possibilities to reach the aim. Naval diplomacy, in fact, could be seen as a threat of use of force from another state that might respond, albeit in naval diplomacy there is an exploitation of power rather than the use of force or physical coercion[146].

This task could be carried out either in war or peace contexts. They could be useful to guarantee, for example, the peaceful acquisition of materials considered strategic influencing suppliers. In a war context, this strategy could be employed for the same end but pursued through other measures, as well as trade protection.

---

[144] *Ivi* p.442.
[145] *Ibid.*
[146] Till. (1982). p.209.

Naval diplomacy is a task with more political implications and not only military ones. In many cases, this latter is impacted by political conditions. To be specific, the military asset that a nation is equipped with or which provides is the product, first of all, of political decisions and, in second place, the output of the situation. In this game, it does not play a secondary role in the diplomatic situation that affects the central decision of a government to invest more and more in some weapons rather than in others. To illustrate, Germany during the First World War based on the political situation to equip with many more submarines, for instance.

The presence of a strong navy, in particular, could be helpful to implement diplomatic vision on foreign relations with other states or to gain more prestige and security or, again, to exercise more influence. This was a common idea of the importance of the navies too, stressed by authors like Mahan and Corbett. The conviction was that a weaker navy could be a damage, both diplomatically and politically, creating problems abroad but also at home. Traditional maritime thought, anyway, was focused mostly on the use of navies in conflicts. They, as a consequence, tended to neglect the use in peacetime.

In the evolution of the years, the role of the naval forces became more relevant in peace than in war. Strategies in peace periods involving navies, hence, increased in their importance becoming central in today's strategic vision. These kinds of missions short of war have mostly a political aim. Admiral S. Turner, reported from Till in his book, distinguished between "preventive" and "reactive deployments". The first one is related to the use of forces to prevent the outbreak of the problem, while the second is related to the use of maritime forces to respond to a crisis. To be effective these missions: 'Need to be appropriate to the situation, pose a credible threat to the opposition and must suggest the capacity to engage in any of five basic actions; amphibious assault, air attack, bombardment, blockade or exposure to reconnaissance'[147].

The idea of the increasing fundamentality of this task appears also in Soviet doctrine. A careful gaze is given to the role that navies could play in influencing other countries. Specifically, the site is directed to Third Countries that could be influenced through some naval visit from the Soviet Navy, as a means to boost their influence.

In summary, this activity is not new and was described as a particular task of navies also in the nineteenth century, even if remaining always in the background. Then, what renders this matter new is its increasing centrality on the strategic thought of today's navies, in fact, 'For the first time has become a significant preoccupation of maritime strategists, an important declared function of navies and justification of having them'[148].

---

[147] *Ivi* p. 210.
[148] *Ivi* p.211.

Anyway, this matter remains the least understood of all. For this reason, authors started new researches directed to improve Naval Diplomacy with the end to find out any possible use and the measures in which it could be applied to be efficient. The strategic doctrine in the last years is working in this sense. This task could be used in three different situations, for example, to 'Support an ally, deter an adversary or compel him to change his policy'[149]. In these studies, they found also the strengths of naval diplomacy. Naval forces, in fact, have attributes that other forces, in general, do not have. To be specific, a feature of navies is their mobility and their geographic reach. They have a staying power, can project power ashore, and could play the role of symbols of the countries' power. Another element that researchers have found is that a menace coming from the sea is precepted in a different way than terrestrial ones. In this sense, navies could be more effective in diplomatic functions than other tools and are less risky to provoke a strong reaction from other states.

Nevertheless, some authors criticized this practice because of progressive enclosure of the oceans or the growing weight of the influence of public opinion on political choices – people take the part of the weaker – or the advanced technologies that increased threats for bigger ships also in poor areas will make it less pervasive than before.

Anyway, naval diplomacy is central for navies, first of these the US Navy that needs it to maintain his presence around the world. In the last period, his influence increased in particular in the area called "Indo-Pacific" in the point of contact between the two oceans. This part of the world, in fact, attracted the attention, especially for its economic prosperity. The passage of the straits of Hormuz as well as the strait of Bab el-Mandeb became a vital international interest because of the passage of tankers. The United States, hence, decided to collocate its naval forces in the area to protect their ships and to influence countries in the area. Another district that caught the eye of the superpower was the South China sea. The growing empowerment of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) was seen as a threat to his interests and his allies in the area, especially Taiwan. The US Navy is monitoring the region with the presence of the Seventh Fleet - his biggest one - based in Japan. The presence of these vessels has the aim to prevent expansions of China, that is extending his control over little islands, or building artificial ones, to advance more claims in the surrounding waters. Few examples of hard responses from both parts have been registered, however, until this moment diplomatic issues have been contained.

Naval diplomacy has been carried on from surface ships. They are of course more successful than, for instance, submarines or aircrafts, in pursuing this task. Many studies, anyway, have concentrated on the research of the tools that could be more effective in the prosecution of diplomacy. In recent years spread the hypothesis of potential new ships, suitable for this matter. Appeared the possibility,

---

[149] *Ivi* p.212.

considering the recent relevance given to the role, that many of the surface vessels could be directed to the persecution of political aims, while submarines could have a more military position. This discussion is, however, very old and so the evolution could be many. Therefore, it is important from here on to understand, according to Till, 'What naval diplomacy is, exactly how it works and what its requirements are'[150]. Subsequently, it will be possible to answer all these questions.

In some way, related to naval diplomacy, another important field today is the use of navies for deterrence. This task was discussed by many authors, one among these is Mahan, whose words are reported from Till in his book. He said that 'The surest way to maintain peace is to occupy a position of menace'[151]. A strategy used from the Royal Navy, in the context of the Pax Britannica, to prevent eventual attacks against the empire. Deterrence, basically, consists in the consideration of action-reaction rules. Deterrence, in his traditional conception, is based on the assessment of the forces of the enemy and the eventual response that they could provide. Do enemies have strong forces or not? This kind of deterrence proved unsuccessful in many events – especially when we think about the wars that happened during the history of mankind – and the reason might be traced back in the evaluation of the potential of the enemy.

Otherwise, what is called "pure" deterrence, that consists in the direction of the armaments straight to the annihilation of the enemy and is pursued through the use of nuclear weapons and leverages on their destructive potential, proved more effective. During history, in fact, no nuclear country has endured an external attack at their metropolitan territory. The only two cases in which this occurred was the attack against Israel in the war of Yom Kippur of 1973 and the Argentinian attack of Falkland in 1982. Nevertheless, in the first case, Israel maintains a nuclear policy of deliberate ambiguity and, in the second case of the Falkland, they were attacked because the Argentinian government was conscious that the UK would not have used nuclear warheads to protect a distant territory[152]. They were not considered, in fact, a relevant territory for national interest and their occupation was not a threat to the integrity of the United Kingdom itself.

Anyway, deterrence and the desire to influence the perception have always been one of the reasons for nations to maintain a naval force in peacetime. This task, however, does not stop during the conflict. It could change direction towards specific matters such as the protection of merchant ships, as it was during the First World War in which attacks from submarines were prevented from the presence of convoys.

---

[150] *Ivi* p.214.
[151] *Ivi* p.215.
[152] Precisely, the Argentine regime did not consider any kind of military response from the UK to protect a remote territory.

In today's navies, deterrence became more important especially during the Cold War because of the nuclear game. Naval forces have been equipped with ballistic missiles firing submarines (SSBN). Strategically they played another role: these submarines, in fact, have the main task of deterrence and of patrolling fundamental lines of communications, evading from the traditional tasks of struggling between fleets. Their target is different too. They are focused on land objectives and not on naval ones. Due to their duty, their movements are planned in collaboration with authorities who deal with land-based missiles.

Apart from this divergence, deterrence could be seen, for many aspects, as contingent to other traditional tasks of the war at sea. To be specific, the use of naval deterrence could be attached to the broad category of offensive operations at sea: power projection. These kinds of operations are conditioned from a certain grade of control of the sea. In particular, the use of nuclear submarines is subjected to this requirement. The two world wars demonstrated how vulnerable submarines are without the coverage of surface ships, in particular when they remerge. On the other side, surface vessels could also play an important position in deterring enemy forces to strike a nuclear attack against the country. Thus, the anti-submarine warfare (ASW) has become a central point in today's strategic discussions.

Nowadays, nuclear deterrence is based on the equivalence of forces between the United States and Russia, as it was during the whole period of the Cold War. The dialectical relations between the two have changed in the last few years. The United States' economic and military superiority materialized with the construction of new anti-submarine weapons and anti-ballistic missiles (ABM). This new type of weapon is creating an imbalance in the relations crystallized from the end of the Second World War on, at least from a military point of view. Therefore, it jeopardizes the nuclear deterrence strategies, employed until today, making them ineffective. The issue, however, is central in the debates of current experts of security strategy around the world.

In this chapter, I am going to analyze the constabulary operations of navies more thoroughly. These tasks, as we saw, grew in their importance after the Second World War and in particular with the evolution of the international regulatory body. This evolution goes, at the same time, with an increased interest of states in the sea as an extension of their affirmed dominion on earth. The doctrine regarding territorial sea progressed from the turn of the seventeenth century, when Hugo Grotius, as well as Alberico Gentili, spoke about the role of the sea and his international nature as common property. Gentili, in particular, said that 'The sea is by nature open to all men and its use is common to all, like that of the air. It cannot, therefore, be shut off by anyone'[153].

After this period states started to pretend more control of the sea near their coasts. In a first moment, international customs established that it corresponded to the range of the cannons. Then doctrine evolved, especially after the Second World War, and laws sealed from the United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982, entered into force in 1994.

Because of the increasing interest of states to exert their sovereignty on seas, the problem of the protection of territorial sea and coasts arose. In addition, the growing importance of the protection of commerce, that became central for economic wealthiness of our societies, created new challenges. The response introduced from some states was to strengthen their navies. In particular, several nations created a specific force, the Coast Guards, that dealt with some specific task relating to the security of the territorial sea. Constabulary operations were separated from military ones.

In this view, the difference between military and constabulary operations, as I have already said in the chapter before, relates to the use of fight. While military tasks tend to use it, constabulary ones use force, but they do not use combat. This is what distinguishes between the two. Nowadays constabulary operations became central in the strategic doctrine of nations and navies, in general. The complexity of this creates some problems distinguishing among the categories.

Therefore, today is important to analyze these operations to better understand which is their role in the world today.

Anti-Piracy Operations

The menace of piracy, against maritime commerce, is ancient. Romans and Greeks had this problem too, in the past. This is a relevant concern if thought as related to the importance of commerce, in particular for western countries. 'Universal jurisdiction exists over pirates, who are viewed as *hostis*

---

[153] A. Gentili. (1598). *De Jure Belli libri tres.* L. I, C. XIX.

humani generis'[154] and for this reason every state can seize a pirate ship, properties or board and arrest members of the crew. The universal jurisdiction is applied because of the threat of piracy to commerce of all nations. Thus, pirates do not respond to their crime only in front of their national state law, but they could be accused in all states because their crime is against humanity. Moreover, another reason related to this fact is the reactive, rather than preventive, nature of responses to piracy. Therefore, because of this, the state could react to the threat without the permission of the national state of pirates.

There are many definitions of what piracy is, Oppenheim for instance described it as 'Every unauthorized act of violence against persons or goods committed on the open sea either by a private vessel against another vessel or by the mutinous crew or passenger against their own ship'[155]. Other authors simply described it as an act of violence, short of war, in open seas.

In 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) there is another definition, narrower, as:

Any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed:

(i)   on the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft;

(ii)   against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place

outside the jurisdiction of any State[156].

Definition of armed robbery has the same characteristics of the one of piracy. The difference between the two is that armed robbery happens not in high seas but in domestic waters of the state (territorial sea, internal and archipelagic waters).

Since it was adopted, this definition of piracy created lots of problems. One is related to the applicability of the universal jurisdiction on terrorist acts, which are distinguished from piracy in the provided definition[157]. This is important in terms of the right of boarding and visiting of suspected terrorist ships.

The identification of piracy, contained in UNCLOS, was discussed also in terms of response to new threats coming from modern evolutions in the field. The menace almost vanished in the nineteenth and twentieth century, many states thus complained of inserting a normative conception of the problem in recent instruments of international law regarding high seas. The issue, however, reemerged in the seventies and eighties of the previous century. Up to date pirates, principally, come

---

[154] N. Klein. (2011). *Maritime Security and the Law of the Sea*. Oxford. Oxford University Press. p. 118.
[155] *Ivi* pp. 118-119.
[156] UNCLOS, article 101.
[157] As we are going to see thoroughly in the following paragraph.

from not developed states and are poor people in search of increasing incomes or former fishermen in a precarious economic situation, or, again, insurgent groups in search for funds to raise their cause. The issue of piracy is an interest for many actors. Piracy and armed robbery, in fact 'Expose seafarers to personal physical harm, as well as disrupting navigation and causing financial loss to ship owners and insurance companies, and ultimately consumers and producers of the goods on board'[158]. Due to this, in addition to measures taken to avoid crimes in territorial sea and straits, there is a growing level of cooperation between countries against the issue. In 2004, for instance, Japan proposed a regional cooperation in Asia to combat crimes of piracy and armed robbery. Whereas piracy is addressed in high seas, armed robbery is fought under the nation's jurisdiction. This agreement, however, does not permit an enforcement of jurisdiction that is left to authorities under national law. The key of this program of cooperation is the establishment of a Sharing Information Center, with the responsibility to enforce the operational coordination of states to fight against these issues and develop more successful measures.

Piracy remains of course central in the challenge of states to seek maritime security. Apart from the limitations in defining the issue, relevant measures were taken to prevent the problem. In particular cooperation between nations demonstrated as the key to solve issues regarding piracy and armed robbery. More coordinated practical measures and national laws, to ensure that universal jurisdiction exists, seems the direction to pursue to respond to this challenge.

When an act of piracy happens in the territorial seas of a state, it is his responsibility to take necessary steps to suppress the criminal behavior and, enforcing national laws, to prohibit such conduct. They are obliged to advertise other states and ships of immediate dangers in their waters. They could be held as responsible too, as they fail in protecting international shipping. Foreign states, in fact, according with international law and, in this specific case, with the principle of innocent passage[159], are not able to take military initiatives in territorial waters of other states. Coastal states, hence, have the responsibility to protect all vessels that pass through their domestic waters.

Even though the fact that piracy and armed robbery are considered universal crimes, few efforts were made to move away from the position that prioritizes the legal rights of coastal states[160]. The fact is confirmed from cases, as we saw for example in Somalia were Security Council permitted the access in territorial seas of the collapsed state to fight pirates' threat, but, at the same time, it was because Somalia had no recognized government and because of the lack of a central authority that could exercise his jurisdiction over the territory, including territorial waters.

---

[158] Klein. (2011). p. 303.
[159] Article 19 para 1 describes it as: 'Passage is innocent so long as it is not prejudicial to the peace, good order or security of the coastal State. Such passage shall take place in conformity with this Convention and with other rules of international law'.
[160] Klein. (2011). p.304.

Otherwise, the Code of Conduct adopted from IMO in 2009, always related to this concern, is subordinated to the consent of the coastal state for responses in territorial waters. So, apart from efforts made to strengthen coordination and cooperation between states in the field, as the systems implemented to share information, it appears that relevant responses in territorial waters could be provided only after the consent of coastal states.

The situation is different outside territorial waters, where states could freely respond to pirates' threats coming from foreign vessels. Here, the right to visit enables warships to board vessels which are reasonably suspected to be engaged in piracy and universal jurisdiction enforces prescriptions against piracy[161].

Achievements ought to be made against piracy from states in a global protection against the threat, to enforce universal jurisdiction, considering territorial sea too. This could start from a reform of the international laws to fit more the new necessities caused by the recent reemergence of the menace. Another way that many states tried to inspire, was the one of broad cooperation between states enforcing measures and methods to respond against pirates' attacks. The procedure, however, is complicated from lots of interests at stake, in particular of many actors involved. To be specific, many nations have the interest to protect their authority over territorial waters and many times it is considered more important for the defense against a common problem.

From this point of view, strategic judgement has to be shaped to protect territorial seas from the menace and consent the protection of international shipping, which is a vital interest for our economies and the key to enable our globalized society to work.

The issue of piracy remains central at an international level because of what is happening in Somalia. In this regard many measures, of political and military nature, were adopted to protect international shipping, including the passage of merchant and fishing vessels and the delivery of essential goods to Somalia inside the World Food Program's (WFP) initiative.

Countries of the region negotiated a Code of Conduct to allow the use of ship-riders, which means that officials of one state are present on board of another state's ship to exercise the authority of the country who has appointed them but on a vessel of a partner nation.

The UN Security Council, through the resolution 1816 of 2008, provided an enforcement action in seeking to address the problem of piracy off the coast of Somalia[162]. This decision was taken with the consent of Somali government under Chapter VII of the UN Charter[163]. In this Resolution, the Security Council gave the possibility, according with Somalia's transitional government, to enter the

---

[161] *Ivi* p. 305.
[162] *Ivi* p.280.
[163] Violent acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea could be seen as a threat to the international peace and security and, due to this, enable the UN Security Council to act under Chapter VII of the UN Charter if there was sufficient political will to do so.

country's territorial waters and use all necessary means to repress criminal acts relating piracy and armed robbery at sea. The notification of action was to be given in advance to the Somalian government and these operations must be consistent in the suppression of the threat in high seas too. Furthermore, other limitations were related to the preservation of the right of innocent passage of third states' ships in Somalian territorial waters and, then, it was underlined that rights, obligations and responsibilities of states under international law – especially arising from UNCLOS – were not affected from this decision. Moreover, UN Security Council's Resolution 1851 of 2001 extended for other 12 month the term of these measures. Even though it was emphasized that Security Council's Resolutions should not modify the existing international law, it is notable, from a normative point of view, that it was authorized an interdiction to respond to a maritime security threat[164].

In July 2005, for the first time a ship of the World Food Program (WFP) carrying emergency relief for Somalia was hijacked. As a consequence, the Program of aid was suspended in the region. In November 2007 started counter piracy operations with a naval escort system after the initiative of France to escort WFP's vessels. Nevertheless, in 2008 there was an escalation of pirates' attacks in the area that requested an intervention of the United Nations. The latter, as we saw before, encouraged the entire international community to take actions against the threat. There was a wide response both from single states and regional actors or alliances, as EU or NATO[165]. On one hand, in this scenario shipowners employed private security firms, while, on the other hand, some governments allocated vessel protection detachments, creating a more complex operational framework. Geopolitical developments in Indian Ocean were accelerated because of the deployment of many warships from different actors, with diverse interests.

The European Union launched the operation *EUNAVFOR Atalanta* in December 2008. It was the first naval operation under the Common Security and Defense Policy. The mission had the aim to protect vessels of the World Food Program (WFP), African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)[166] and other vulnerable shipping. It deters, prevents and represses piracy and armed robbery at sea, monitors fishing activities off the coast of Somalia and supports other EU missions and international organizations working to strengthen maritime security and capacity in the region[167]. Among the EU member states, Greece, France, Spain, Germany, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Sweden, Italy and the Netherlands have taken part in EUNAVFOR Atalanta. Moreover, a broad interest was shown also from non-EU countries, such as Switzerland, that participated for the first

---

[164] Klein. (2011). p.281.
[165] More in-depth analysis the following paragraph (*Case Study: NATO and the EU in Somalia).*
[166] *EUNAVFOR* mission sustained AMISOM with the deployment of forces. The latter is also financed by European countries to help with capacity building with the aim to increase the efficiency of the Somali force and to combat the abuses against human rights.
[167] https://eunavfor.eu/mission/.

time in an EU mission. It has a broad area of operation that covers the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and a large part of the Indian Ocean and has available navy vessels (surface and auxiliary, including embarked helicopters) and maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft. Then, according to K. Homan and S. Kamerling, '*EUNAVFOR* was the first to establish an online centre for transiting ships through the Gulf of Aden known as the Maritime Security Centre'[168]. This has the function to record movements, application for assistance and receiving threat information and advice. This system has provided much more protection from eventual attacks. There are some episodes of hijacking, though the supervision provided by EU military ships in the area.

NATO, following the request of former UN Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon, launched in 2008 anti-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa, deploying the Standing NATO maritime Group 1 (SNMG1). Under operation *Allied Provider*, NATO protected World Food Program's vessels transiting in the Horn of Africa and Gulf of Aden region. When the objectives of the mission were passed to operation *EUNAVFOR Atalanta*, the mission was closed at the end of 2008, starting again with new aims of 'Deter, defend against and disrupt piracy activities'[169] in the spring 2009. The mission, however, was substituted in August 2009 following the decision of the North Atlantic Council, from operation *Ocean Shield* for which were deployed NATO Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 and 2 (SNMG1 & 2). Operation *Ocean Shield* had the responsibility, as other missions, to deter and respond to piracy. Both operations were not born as counter-piracy missions, but as operations out-of-area in Asia. They were, then, turned into this aim because they shared the same maritime theatre, also considering that former Secretary general of NATO Jaap de Hoop Scheffer stated that 'It is not acceptable that NATO is present in the region without doing anything to fight piracy'[170]. NATO, however, has not signed any Memorandum of Understanding with countries of the region, this led to incidents in which pirates captured were then released because of the lack of prosecution capability ("catch and let go" principle). This is one of the reasons why NATO' s mission is less effective than the EU's one. In addition, NATO's operational area is broader than the one of the EU mission, which is concentrated with all his forces around Somalia, as a critical point.

Other nations conducted operations in the area, with an alliance or alone. In 2009 United States Naval Force Command established Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151) which aims to conduct of anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean, near Somalia. The counter-piracy mission has involved different members from around the world. A consortium of Arab countries including, among others, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar and Egypt, announced in 2009 the launch of operations

---

[168] K. Homan and S. Kamerling. (2010). *Operational Challenges to Counterpiracy Operations off the coast of Somalia.* in B. Van Ginkel and F.-P. Der Putten *The International response to Somali piracy: challenges and opportunities.* Leiden. Brill – Nijhoff. p. 75.
[169] *Ivi* p. 77.
[170] *Ibid.*

intended to reduce the spread of piracy threat from the Gulf of Aden to the Red Sea and Suez Canal. Other countries acted alone, in a way or another, with missions of counter-piracy, patrol and convoying operations to protect their own national vessels. These operations were launched in particular from Russia, China and India as well as other Asian countries (Japan, South Korea to mention someone). In this particular case it should be mentioned that, it 'Is India's and China's first extended transcontinental naval operational deployment and this consequently poses operational challenges'[171].

Another means for security in the area, for shipping industries, was the possibility to hire private security companies or to ask for vessel protection detachments (VPD)[172]. The use of private security firms for protection, in particular, is a spreading custom in this maritime area. As reported from Homan and Kamerling: 'The growing interest among merchant fleets in hiring their own firepower is encouraged by the United States and represents a new and potentially lucrative market for security firms'[173]. On the contrary, the majority of EU countries do not share this position.

Private security companies provide shipowners with three different services: shipboard security with a small armed team onboard, escort through high-risk waters, sharing information and intelligence, giving advice, monitoring onboard security or training the crew. The borrowing of private firms for security could be problematic: the use of force from private contractors is not investigated as would be the one from military units, in fact, victims of violence from private actors could be easily kept quiet, as shown in different episodes. In addition, many stated that the 'Presence of private armed teams on commercial ships can result in an escalation of violence'[174]. Many countries, for this reason, prohibited the employment of private contractors in their merchant fleets.

In conclusion, the situation near the coasts of Somalia is complicated from the presence of different actors. This brought an evolution of the geo-political situation and was used to boost contrasts or to enforce nations' influence in the area. Nevertheless, navies had a great role in enforcing laws and in securing the region obtaining a lot of success in protection of ships of international aid programs as well as merchant vessels, considering the relevance of the area that is navigated from a high number of tanker ships.

---

[171] *Ivi* p. 79.
[172] Uniformed military personnel embarked on a vessel with explicit approval of the Flag State in question for escorts through high seas waters.
[173] Homan and Kamerling. (2010). p. 80.
[174] *Ivi* p. 82.

Case study: NATO and the European Union in Somalia

The threat that came from acts of piracy started in 2007 and increased rapidly. In 2008 there were 111 actual cases, an increase of 200% from the previous year. Then, in 2009 where it registered a serious growth of the menace with 217 incidents[175]. The interested area was the Gulf of Aden and the southern part of the Red Sea, near the coasts of Somalia. Other incidents happened, however, in the southern part of the Indian Ocean near Madagascar and Seychelles.

Pirates that operated with small boats and were equipped with automatic rifles and grenades, boarded and hijacked bigger ships taking all passengers and crew-members hostages. The motive of these attacks was not political. Piracy in Somali coasts, in fact, was a profitable activity made for private purposes.

According to international law, as we have just said, it is the exclusive responsibility of the coastal state to protect the passage in his domestic waters and address eventual issues which, as in this case, could limit the enjoyment of the right of freedom of navigation as well as the right of freedom of passage. Nevertheless, Somalia appears in the list of the failed states. From 1991, hence, the African state has had no government to secure domestic security, finishing to produce a situation of instability dominated by hunger and poverty. This difficulty, especially from an economic point of view, led to an increasing presence of pirates in its waters, which operated without any control. They took advantage from the strategic geographical position of Somalia, an essential crossing point that connects Asia and Middle East countries with the Mediterranean Sea via the Suez Canal.

Every year around 20.000 ships that carry more or less the 12% of the whole quantity of the world's oil and a significant part of European energy imports pass through the Gulf of Aden[176]. Around 15% of the world's trade and 80% of the total European commerce passes through this sea area[177]. The pirates also attacked the World Food Program's ships that deliver food aid to the Somali population that, because of the difficult situation of the country, was compelled in a condition of starvation. Millions of people in the country depended on these humanitarian aids.

Therefore, the protection of the area was a central interest for the international community, especially for European countries, both from an economic and a humanitarian point of view. As the situation was not fixable from the Somali government itself, that would have had the primary responsibility according to the international law to protect the principle of freedom of passage near its coasts, it fell on the international community to replace the single country to protect from this threat.

---

[175] C. Fahron-Hussey. (2019). *Military Crisis Management Operations by NATO and the EU. The Decision-Making Process.* Wiesbaden. Springer VS. p. 195.
[176] *Ivi* p.196.
[177] *Ibid.*

The pivotal countries in the area reacted all in different ways to the menace. The United States immediately understood the importance of the region and, from the end of G. W. Bush's administration and in the first period of B. Obama administration, they proposed a military mission to prevent acts of piracy in the area which had also involved their own ships in different episodes[178]. This had to be persecuted together with its partners and all the countries interested in the region. However, no mention was made if the mission had to be led by NATO or by the European Union. From 2002, in the framework of Operation Enduring Freedom, the United States organized a coalition called Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), that included a dozen of countries, that had the role to operate in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf and the Indian ocean; an extremely wide area. The coalition exploited the headquarters placed in Bahrain, sharing it with the US Navy's Fifth Fleet. It was a response inside the framework of the "War on terror" launched from the United States President Bush after the terrorist attack of 9/11. The mission had a broad focus on maritime protection but with specific attention on counter-terrorism activities at sea, thus, it had only a small concentration on counter-piracy.

On January 2009, due to the increasing threat coming from piracy, the United States established the Combined Task Force 151 (CTF151), one of the task forces operating in the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), as a separate force with the specific task to fight against pirates off the Horn of Africa. At the same time, the United States started its participation with NATO in a specific mission in the area. They understood the importance of the area and that the problem was global, hence, they saw a joint forces mission inside NATO in a positive way. The United States was in favour also to a counter-piracy operation led by the European Union and did not see any duplication on it.

Another pivotal actor in the area was the United Kingdom that suffered the kidnapping of a British couple in the area. Feeling threatened from pirates, the country stated that the issue had to be solved and for this reason was in favour of a military operation led by NATO. The United Kingdom was at the beginning really sceptical of a European Union mission because, as a traditionally Atlanticist country, it feared that 'An autonomous naval operation by the EU might weaken Europe's commitment to NATO'[179].

Therefore, given the presence of the United States' mission Combined Maritime Forces and a NATO mission in the area, the United Kingdom was against another military intervention, EU-led, focused on counter-piracy. The country changed his position only at the moment in which it was clear that the European Union mission would have launched it anyway. Then, the United Kingdom take the

---

[178] An example was the kidnapping of Captain Phillips in 2009. He was then saved from a military mission organized by United States forces.
[179] C. Fahron-Hussey. (2019). p. 216.

lead of the European Union operation, providing the use of the Operational Headquarter of Northwood[180], to direct it militarily and politically.

Another element, as well, that convinced the United Kingdom's government would have been the EU's legal approach concerning suspected pirates, indeed, 'The question of how to deal with pirates was highly important to the United Kingdom'[181].

Other pivotal players were Germany and France. Even though it was a member of NATO, Germany chose to take part only in the EU operation. France considered itself the first country to act against piracy off the Horn of Africa when launched Operation Alcyon, employing his ships to escort World Food Program's vessels and protect the distribution of food aid. France, on the same occasion, invited other countries to participate in the operation. In addition, when the French luxury yacht *Le Ponant* was hijacked by pirates in 2008, they understood that was at stake the security of French civilians. Therefore, they thought that piracy had to be eliminated and Somali coasts secured. In July 2008 France took the presidency of the Council of the European Union and tried to push the European Security and Defence Policy forward proposing a naval mission against piracy in the area. The country had the idea that thanks to this important operation, the European Union would have strengthened its global role, establishing itself also as a military actor. So, like Germany, France prioritized a European Union operation.

A lot of impacts, in this case, had the special effort made by the United Nations Security Council. The body, that includes the most influential countries of the planet, played a leading role thanks to its Resolutions. In May 2008 the first called for action to defend vessels that transported humanitarian aid to Somalia. In the same moment, the United States and France circulated a resolution draft in which it condemned piracy off the Somali coast, since it created problems to foods' delivery and humanitarian assistance to the Somali population, and because it established dangers for the shipping lines. It was adopted as Resolution 1816 on June 2, 2008. The Resolution that would have had important implications for the situation, 'Authorized cooperating states to take all the necessary measures to repress Somali piracy'[182]. This approach was reaffirmed also by the United Nations Security Council Resolution number 1838, which welcomed a possible EU operation.

The Secretary-General of the period, Ban Ki-Moon, played an important position, too. At the end of September 2008, he invoked the necessity for a naval intervention in the area to escort ships of the World Food Program, which were under attack. Ban Ki-Moon especially called NATO to take up this responsibility. This claim had a very quick positive answer from the alliance, which launched in

---

[180] It is at the same time, the Headquarter and Strategic command of the British Forces, but it was also provided for NATO and EU operations. This element helped the coordination of the different counter-piracy operations off the coasts of Somalia.
[181] C. Fahron-Hussey. (2019). p. 205.
[182] *Ivi* p.211.

October of the same year, a few days after this declaration, its first counter-piracy mission, called Operation Allied Provider, with the aim to protect the World Food Program's humanitarian aid and food delivery by sea. The mission had also the task to provide protection to the ships, hired by the African Union, that helped AMISOM with logistical supplies.

Operation Allied Provider, however, was seen only as a temporary measure and ended in December 2008 when it was substituted by the EU mission EUNAVFOR Atalanta. Experts debate if there was programmed disposal of the tasks, from NATO to the EU, since Operation Allied Provider had been designed as a short-term measure that would have been substituted from an intervention organized by the European Union. On the contrary, other experts stated that there was no connection on the activity of the two international organizations and that the naval force, temporarily committed in counter-piracy, would have been returned to the Mediterranean in December 2008, hence, the transition of power was completely random. However, how things really went, have never been understood.

Inside the European Union the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1816 of 2008, as we have seen, had a huge impact on the situation creating the conditions, for its organs as well as for its member states, to start projecting a naval operation. In June of the same year, in fact, the General Secretariat and European Commission started studies on how to help the implementation of the Resolution. On the other hand, member states moved since July 2008 following the taking over of the EU Presidency by France. Actively supported by France and Spain, which had huge fishing interests off the Horn of Africa, EU countries started to debate a counter-piracy operation in the area. The countries that were more sympathetic with this endeavour saw it as an 'Opportunity to launch a naval operation with relatively few risks for its military personnel and show that the EU could act without NATO even in the maritime realm'[183]. It consisted of a huge challenge for the regional organization. On the contrary, states that opposed this initiative highlighted that the European Union had never carried out a naval operation before and that only NATO was able to conduct these operations[184]. In their opinion, in fact, NATO seemed ideal to promote a certain type of operations, especially naval ones.

In the same month, a paper with options, including a military operation, written jointly by the European Commission and by the Council Secretariat was circulated. In August the Council of the EU adopted a Crisis Management Concept stressing the importance of the region off the Horn of Africa in terms of global trade and as a line of connection for the passage of resources. The body took advantage of promoting a European Union contribution to the maritime security of the region. The

---

[183] *Ivi* p. 214.
[184] *Ivi* p. 216.

same authority in September adopted the Council Joint Action 749/2008 creating an EU military coordination called European Union Coordination Action (NAVCO). It had the purpose to support the counter-piracy activities of the EU member states that had already deployed their forces in the Horn of Africa, within the framework of other joint naval missions. it was supposed to coordinate their efforts until the EU operation could be deployed. In fact, it would have been later incorporated by EUNAVFOR Atalanta.

Despite the delays due to the cautious approach followed by the United Kingdom's government, the political discussions inside the European Union continued. France, Germany and Spain pushed for this mission. In addition, it was asked an opinion on the matter to the United States, that revealed themselves in favour of the possibility to launch an EU naval operation in the area. Because of the growing support to the military operation, the United Kingdom cautiously started to change its position, considering its eventual participation in the mission. The knot already untangled was, however, related to the geographical placement of the Operational Headquarter. Many countries, and in particular French government, thought that it had to be given to the United Kingdom because of the experience of its fleet. Nevertheless, the United Kingdom's minister of defence showed no enthusiasm for this request.

To convince the other member states of the convenience of an EU operation, the countries which supported the measure leveraged on the transfer agreements for captured pirates, signed by the European Union with many countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Mauritius and Seychelles. On the contrary, 'NATO did not get any legal arrangements to transfer suspected pirates to third countries for prosecution'[185]. The fact that the European Union had the capability to conclude transfer agreements with the countries of the area is one of the reasons that persuaded the United Kingdom, as well as other member states that had been originally contrary to an EU operation and which were traditionally more attached to the idea that only NATO had the ability to conduct naval operations, to participate. Even Norway, which is a member of NATO but did not enter into the European Union, was convinced to participate in the EU operation because of this legal aspect.

Therefore, the fact that EUNAVFOR Atalanta had the possibility to transfer detained pirates in neighbouring countries to be processed, was the feature that distinguished it from operations conducted by NATO. The United Kingdom decided, in October 2008, to provide Northwood as the Operational Headquarter for the Eu counter-piracy operation, requiring a serious commitment in terms of forces by the other member states, to increase the operation's credibility. As the United Kingdom occupied the command in NATO counter-piracy operations, it functioned as a point of connection between the two organizations. On November 10, the Council of the EU adopted the

---

[185] *Ivi* p. 217.

Council Joint Action 851/2008 creating a military operation in support of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1814, 1816 and 1838[186].

Then, on December 8, 2008 the Council of the EU, through the Decision 2008/918, launched operation EUNAVFOR Atalanta with the task to protect the ships of the World Food Program directed to Somalia to bring humanitarian aid, as well as other vulnerable vessels like merchant ships, 'The EU operation was in charge of deterring, preventing, and repressing acts of piracy off the Somali coast'[187].

Before the decision of the European Union to launch the Operation EUNAVFOR Atalanta, some of his member states proposed to incorporate the deal made between NATO and the European Union called Berlin Plus. In this agreement, it was decided to enforce the collaboration of the two parties. Nevertheless, this position was rejected since it would have delayed the beginning of the operation of about two or three months as a result of prolonged negotiations. Another reason, as well, was related to the contrast between Turkey and Cyprus. Since Berlin Plus was discarded, the European Union could not rely on NATO's assets[188], as a consequence, there could be no collaboration between the two organizations. 'Even though NATO and the EU share the majority of member states and had counter-piracy operations with similar mandates in the same area, there was no formal cooperation and, for instance, no exchange of sensitive information between the two international organizations'[189].

In mid-December 2008, anyway, within NATO there was an increasing consideration to send a fleet off the Horn of Africa, starting a parallel counter-piracy operation that supported the one of the EU[190]. The operation was launched in March 2009. The new Operation Allied Protector was promoted by two countries that had a particular interest to begin an operation off Somali coasts, in the specific Turkey and Denmark. Turkey was only a member of NATO and did not want to take part in the EU operation, in addition, it had a conflictual relation with Cyprus, which was already an EU member state. Denmark, on the other hand, was a member both of NATO and of the European Union 'But it had long since decided to opt-out of matters of EU security policy'[191], therefore the government preferred to take part in NATO operation. Operation Allied Protector was figured with broader functions 'To protect vulnerable vessels and deter, defend against, and disrupt pirate activities'[192]. The mission was considered, again, as a temporary extent.

---

[186] *Ivi* p.218.
[187] *Ibid.*
[188] *Ivi* p. 219.
[189] *Ivi* p. 234.
[190] *Ivi* p. 212.
[191] *Ibid.*
[192] *Ivi* p. 213.

In April 2009, the ambassadors in the North Atlantic Council started to plan their longer-term counter-piracy operation. The Strategic Command thought it was better to substitute, inside Operation Allied Protector, the SNMG1 with SNMG2 before the beginning of any new mission. Then, the longer-term Operation Ocean Shield was launched on August 17, 2009. It was characterized by a more comprehensive approach as opposed to the previous NATO counter-piracy operations. These were the focus of the mission; however, an important element was added. In the specific, the operation additionally included capacity-building endeavours to prepare African states of the region of the Horn of Africa, especially their naval forces, to fight piracy in a more efficient way. It is the distinctive element of this mission, which made it different from other counter-piracy efforts, especially from the European Union's one.

In conclusion, the two missions have been successful in their results achieved. Both NATO and EU operations escorted World Food Program ships as well as other vulnerable vessels. Their action was helpful to reduce episodes of hijackings and kidnappings in the region, increasing protection of the ships that need to pass through this area and, in particular, defending the international rights of freedom of navigation and passage. Although the undoubtedly important outcomes achieved, the operations were criticized by the international public opinion, mostly, for two orders of reasons.

Firstly, it was debated the effect produced by the dual presence in the area of ships under the same flag. In fact, during the mission, it happened many times that a ship that was used for an operation than was employed also in the other. Many experts criticized this fact. From their perspective, it was caused by political issues. In addition, it led to a limited cooperation between the two, which is an element both operations did not benefit from. On the contrary, other experts stated that the presence of two missions in the region acted as a strengthening feature, providing more positive effects.

Secondly, it was criticized for the element that, in a certain way, conditioned the accomplishments of the operations. Both military measures, in fact, 'Only addressed the symptom but not the root causes of piracy off the Somali coast. Since there are political and socio-economic drivers of piracy in Somalia, longer-term policies that improve the structural conditions in the country are needed'[193]. This element has implied that, despite the concrete reduction of piracy, many criminals oriented their activities in less patrolled areas, thus, limiting the purpose to achieve complete suppression of threats arising from piracy acts.

Anyway, both missions obtained more than promising results. They, at least, were able to reduce the menace of piracy, diminishing significantly raids in the area and so protecting World Food Program ships and other vulnerable vessels, hence, ensuring the respect of the principle of freedom of passage. These positive achievements have caused an evolution of the situation off the Horn of Africa. With

---

[193] *Ivi* pp. 235-236.

the reduction of the menace, it decreased the necessity for military deployment. NATO Operation Ocean Shield suffered a lack of participation and, for this reason, it was established to close and to limit the presence of vessels in the area, at the end of 2016.

The European Union Operation EUNAVFOR Atalanta continues today, even though resources and forces employed have been limited. In general, it has reached a lot of positive results contributing in a meaningful way to the reduction of piracy actions off the Somali coast. Many countries are promoting an expansion of the operations monitoring and enforcing peace agreement and, in particular, the arms embargo determined towards Eritrea. Nevertheless, this project has had no success until now because it has been lacking the consensus among member states[194].

Terrorism Operations and Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

Terrorism and proliferation of weapon of mass destruction (from now on WMD) are not new menaces to maritime security. At the beginning it was considered inside the framework of piracy crimes because all offences made in high seas were collocated in this category. When doctrine evolved, however, with a specific definition of piracy as crimes related to 'Private ends'[195], to be intended as 'Financial purposes'[196], many crimes driven by a more private or public end were no more placeable among these. These, hence, started to figure as acts of maritime terrorism.

The issue of terrorism arose in particular after September 11, 2001 when four coordinated airlines were hijacked against the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, disrupting United States and the World. It was easy to think about an immediate threat of the same entity on ports which throughout the day pass a lot of ships from diverse countries. Maybe this time with a small boat full of explosives. Other menaces came were individuated for tankers or the traffic in shipping containers of WMD and supplies or other financial means, directed to strengthen terrorist cells.

Maritime terrorism is described from Joyner, and reported in Klein's book, as 'The systematic use or threat to use acts of violence against international shipping and maritime services by an individual or group to induce fear and intimidation in a civilian population in order to achieve political ambitions or objectives'[197]. This issue became a concrete interest after the hijacking of an Italian ship in 1985, the *Achille Lauro,* from a group of terrorists belonging to the Palestinian Liberation Forces, which cost the life of an American passenger[198].

---

[194] Data collected by the European Union. For more details visit the operation's website (https://eunavfor.eu).
[195] UNCLOS, art. 101.
[196] Klein. (2011). p.147.
[197] *Ivi* p.148.
[198] The episode happened more or less 30 miles off the coast of Egypt, the hijackers had a passenger on board prior to taking the control of the vessel (in total there were 4 terrorists). The hijackers aim was to free 50 Palestinians

This episode enhanced from one side the rules of states to fight the threat but, from the other side, it started a process of intensification of these crimes. After the *Achille Lauro*, in fact in the background of the civilian warfare in Sri Lanka, the Tamil Tigers were used to attack sea transport to promote their interests. Other episodes in this sense took place near the Philippines and Yemen. One of the last cases was the one of the US Navy destroyer Cole which was struck from Al Qaeda affiliated terrorists in 2000. Other attacks were perpetrated in ports with small vessels packed with explosives or with car bombs, parcel bombs and suicide bombers. The United States denounced that Al Qaeda had in its hands diverse cargo ships which can be used to strike big ships or to transport WMD and pack a destructive weapon to attack some port. Another concern was related to the possible employment of these ships used for economic purposes to support terrorist strikes. What became clear, in particular after the 9/11 terrorist attack was the possible range of these acts and that, at an international level, there was a lack of adequate rules to fight against this threat.

The concern of terrorist cells obtaining WMD has risen, in particular after the discovery of the case of Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer[199] and his international network, extended to North Korea or Libya, intended to share knowledge regarding the production of nuclear weapons. States, after this incident, raise their defensive barriers. Experts found an increasing possibility of 70% to be hit from terrorists using WMD. This issue became more important in particular taking into consideration the fact that also smaller states or non-state actors could be equipped with this kind of weapons, increasing the menace.

The concerns of a possible sale of these devastating armaments to non-state actors or to small states, in contact with terrorist cells, has been the focus of the normative, political and operational development of the following years. States have become concerned with non-proliferation, which aim is to slow or to reverse the trend, but also with counter-proliferation which aspires to limit, for specific figures, the possibility to obtain these technologies or to reduce or eliminate the existing capability of actors. Non-proliferation treaties include export controls and generally introduce systems of control and sanctions against possible violations. Counter-proliferation aims of deterrence, defense or interdiction of attacks and 'Preemptive acts of force against either actual or potential possessors of WMD'[200]. These measures proved controversial in the sense that their regime, in a

---

imprisoned in Israel in exchange for the safe release of all 400 passengers. They killed an American passenger, Leon Klinghoffer, before he surrendered and was arrested by Egyptian authorities. The Egyptian airplane that should have brought the terrorists on land was intercepted from US fighter aircrafts that escorted the Egyptian plane in Italy where criminals were processed and arrested. This episode prevented the criminals from being processed for piracy under international law. It caused, however, a dilemma in terms of laws to apply regarding acts of terrorism.

[199] Abdul Qadeer confessed his implication in the case in 2004. He was forgiven by the Pakistani government.
[200] Klein. (2011). pp. 149-150.

certain way, impacted the entire bases of today's commerce at sea. Issues, in particular, arose in respect of the national sovereignty on sea and on the freedom of navigation in high seas.

Given the fact that approximately 90% of the international commerce passes through the sea a terrorist attack against a large port, and his subsequent closure, would cause a relevant damage, especially in terms of economic losses. Then, the possibility to suffer from an attack perpetrated through weapons of mass destruction, which for their nature are so potentially damaging for people, the anxiety of governments grew up. Although the opposition of some governments, generally the threat from these attacks has been considered the higher point from the government. The idea of taking measures against this menace was shared from the majority of international actors.

Following the episode of the ship *Achille Lauro* of 1985, an increasing number of countries were instigated to take some extent, from a normative point of view, to limit the possible repetition of this event. In consequence of normative doubts in the resolution of the case, three states – Egypt, Italy and Austria – proposed the adoption of an agreement under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) 'To set forth comprehensive requirements for the suppression of unlawful acts committed against the safety of maritime navigation which endanger innocent human lives […]; seriously affect the operation of maritime services and, thus, are of a grave concern to the international community as a whole'[201]. The result of this claim was the adoption of the 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA). The importance of this convention at the period was that, for the first time, there was the recognition of specific acts against ships and 'Provided bases by which states could establish jurisdiction over the perpetrators of those unlawful acts'[202].

The SUA convention of 1988 fixed some of the normative gaps faced during the examination of the case of *Achille Lauro*. Nevertheless, it presented other limitations and weaknesses which the doctrine had to mend, regarding the response to terrorist's threats at sea. In particular, it individuated one category of these crimes, giving the possibility for states to exercise their jurisdiction on it. In addition, it adopted the principle according to which states could judicate criminals using their national laws or extradite the subject to other states. The SUA Convention of 1988 was relevant not only because of the setting of proceedings forms against the crime of maritime terrorism, but also due to the thorough definition of possible offences that could be embedded in this crime, including attempts and complicity. They were described in article 3 of the Convention. Here, especially, the inclusion of the offence against a person injured or killed during the commission, or attempt to commission, of an act of terrorism was a new matter for the period. What the Convention did not

---

[201] *Ivi* pp. 151-152.
[202] *Ivi* p. 152.

address was the solution for a situation in which the terrorists had a foreign vessel in their hands. This gap was known at the period, but it was left to the resolution throughout the national laws in the field, although they were considered ill-adapted.

A limitation of the Convention, that immediately draws the attention, is the lack of provisions to exercise enforcement jurisdiction, like the right to visit, in both prevention and suppression of the offences. This limitation is directed to preserve the freedom of navigation in high seas. International law, in fact, provides that there is no possibility for foreign states to stop and control other than their flagged vessels in high seas. This principle was reaffirmed by this convention. Here, the only provisions regarding actions to prevent, or to suppress acts of terrorism expected, are limited to a cooperation and sharing of information at intelligence level. The Convention focuses more on the suppression of these acts than on prevention. This is one of the motives that resulted in his review when concerns related to terrorism acts increased.

In the same period, in relation to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, there were three key treaties: Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty, Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological Weapons Convention. The Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993, entered into force in 1997, is the first international Convention on the ban of the acquisition, production, detention, development, use or transfer of all chemical weapons and the materials connected. There is a problem linked to this Convention, when talking about shipments. It is the fact that there is no ban for chemicals used in peaceful context. The strong feature of this treaty is the possibility to create an inspection committee of experts organized by the implementing body of the convention, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), with the role to investigate, in the field too, if there are concerns that states had or made use of chemical weapons. We saw it working for example in the context of the Syrian crisis in 2017, when Assad's regime was accused of having used this type of weapons against civilians. The Biological Convention of 1972, entered into force in 1975, prohibits states parties from developing, producing, acquiring or retaining biological weapons to be used with hostile purposes or, more broadly, in armed conflict. Nevertheless, biological researches could be done only for peaceful purposes. The Nuclear non-proliferation treaty of 1968, entered into force in 1970, forbids the proliferation of nuclear weapons acknowledging the presence of five nuclear states[203]. Nevertheless, other states could research, produce, use, transfer (in specific conditions) nuclear materials but only for peaceful purposes.

---

[203] They are the five permanent members of the Security Council. They obtained the first nuclear weapons before signing the Convention: USA in 1945, Russia in 1949, UK in 1952, France in 1960 and China in 1964. Other states possess nuclear weapons as India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel. The latter has never confirmed the possession of these weapons adopting a policy of strategic ambiguity.

These international binding measures were integrated from some states with other instruments to gain more success in impeding the commerce or general export of WMD, like in the case of Australia. These instruments, though, were not successful to stop the whole proliferation and the black market created to run a business of these weapons. The problem here is that the shipment of these materials is not forbidden from international law and, for this reason, it is a matter of the states to take apposite measures to control it. This makes the actions fragmented from diverse national responses. So, at an international level new more incisive rules are needed. The framework is additionally complicated from the methods employed in this field. WMD could be generally used, in fact, for pacific and military purposes. This is a struggling point to bear in mind also for what concerns the formulation of new rules at the international level. This is the reason why these materials could be transferred or used by states, notwithstanding treaties of non-proliferation. The interdiction has to follow the proof that they were used for military purposes and not civil one, and it is hard to demonstrate. 'The lacunae arising from the WMD proliferation regime in the maritime context could therefore be seen in relation to the authority for states to stop the transport of WMD and related material at sea, as well as the existence of appropriate jurisdictional bases for action at port and in the territorial sea'[204].

In response to the issue, states implemented legal initiatives to secure ports and territorial waters. These rules are fundamental because docks are the connection of international shipping, as they are 'The vital starting and end points in maritime transport'[205]. Every attack on ports could damage the entire chain of the international supply. Their vulnerability was underlined by past attacks. Furthermore, the relevance of security of ports is related to a practical perspective. It is easier, in fact, to inspect ships when they are docked in the port than when they are at sea. These motivations pushed the International Maritime Organization to adopt specific instruments in this sense, but also other states on their own introduced instruments to implement controls.

The International Maritime Organization adopted in 1986 a circular entitled "Measures to Prevent Unlawful Acts against Passengers and Crew on Board Ships", which was a recommendation and, hence, voluntarily adopted from states. It was, however, not widely endorsed by state parties. The situation changed after the attack of 9/11, when concerns of terrorist attack arose. A response to secure ports and ships was the adoption of ISPS Code, entered into force in 2004. The code is attached to the Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS Convention) as an amendment to the Article XI. ISPS Code includes new measures to enhance maritime security[206], in the first part it introduces

---

[204] Klein. (2011). p.157.
[205] *Ibid.*
[206] Thanks to the adoption of ISPS Code, SOLAS Convention was extended beyond question for maritime safety to question maritime security.

compulsory security standards for governments, port authorities and shipping companies whilst in the second part it introduces guidelines determining how to meet these requirements.

ISPS Code identifies preventive measures against security incidents, that are 'Any suspicious act or circumstance threatening the security of the ship'[207]. It is applied to ships, passengers and cargo, of a capacity of 500 tons and superior. Must be excluded from these measures: warships, government ships for non-commercial purposes and fishing vessels. These latter, especially, constitute a lacuna for the normative body because they were used many times for terrorist aims, like the already mentioned case of the US Navy destroyer Cole.

The aim of the ISPS Code is also to introduce risk-management schemes to make the government understand threats against their ships and their ports and, thus, act to reduce these menaces. The Code makes an effort to enhance the communication and coordination between ships, their officers, port facilities[208] and relevant states. The idea is to create a kind of common predisposition to security onboard and in the docks, to coordinate regular shipping operations.

Flag states have the role to approve Ship Security Plans that must be held by all the vessels and develop a Declaration of Security with the aim to clarify duties of port facilities and ships. Coastal states have the responsibility to set the risk and take efficient provisions to grant higher security standards possible in their harbors. Among them are included the adoption of Port Facility Security Plans and the training of Port Facility Security Officers. To reduce the possible vulnerabilities, ships would be subjected to controls on respect of security standards set by the coastal state. These could be inspections, delaying, detaining of the ship or restriction in its operation in the port and administrative measures. Inspections are, for international law, limited from principles of proportionality, minimum severity and reasonability. Another limitation that must not be missed, is the previous cooperation with the flag state of the ship that is the only one who can permit this supplementary controls in their vessels. Moreover, no comparable power of investigation or detention is given in cases of simple suspicion of involvement in acts of terrorism or in proliferation of WMD. This could be mitigated by appealing to innocent passage and national criminal authority over ports, with the application of national legal frameworks. The problem could be solved through the cooperation between states. Sharing information, for instance, could be vital to determine if suspicions against a vessel could arise. The ISPS code is an example of the cooperation of states in the creation of an instrument to improve maritime security, a concern shared from the majority of the actors but, at the same time, also balanced with the maintenance of the efficiency of international shipping.

---

[207] Klein. (2011). p.158.
[208] To be specific it intends Port Facilities Security Officers, Company Security Officers and Ships Security Officers.

A relevant response to the threat of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction come from the implementation of measures of interdiction in the EEZ and high seas. Controls onboard could be easily done when ships are docked at the port, but it could be a menace to make a vessel enter in the territorial sea. Inspections in the high seas should be efficient in avoiding eventual incidents. Furthermore, suspected ships could be escorted from the coastal state in the port to make detailed controls onboard. These instruments achieved new results but, at the same time, remain obvious the weaknesses generated from an interest of states in protecting their right to a free navigation, which is often preferred to the achievement of a higher step in maritime security.

The United States promoted an improvement, in the framework of the 1988 SUA Convention, recognizing new terrorist offences, as well as crimes related to the proliferation of WMD and actions to face a suspected terrorist ship. The result of this encouragement was the adoption of the second Protocol to the SUA convention in 2005. States have shared the idea to renew the precedent legal framework. The protocol contains, thus, addictions in terms of new crimes and aspects that appear relevant in the advancement of the doctrine which in the meantime has adopted several international conventions to fight against terrorist's threats. Nevertheless, these inclusions in the precedent doctrine and the strengthening of the application of jurisdiction in these cases from states appear controversial. The problem is, again, related to the balance between the introduction of a renewed and more effective doctrine and the maintenance of the former authority of flag states over their ships. This has repercussions on the innovation introduced with the second protocol which included the new right to search and visit onboard ships.

The original aim of the protocol, according to Klein, was to add new offences under article 3 over which states could establish jurisdiction. In setting out offences, it includes violence against or destruction of the ships, exercising control by force or intimidation, and communication of false information that could endanger the vessel and its passengers[209]. In the renewed protocol there is the introduction also of serious damages to the environment. It relates the use of the BCN weapons too - identified as biological, chemical and nuclear weapons – without provisions that could affect rights and obligations of the other international treaties in the field. A new offence is created in relation to the transportation of explosives or materials, also biological, chemical and nuclear materials, which could be used in terrorist attacks both in the strike itself and in the production of eventual weapons that could be used in future attacks. This aspect is relevant. These materials, in fact could be used not only to create a prejudice to maritime security, to a ship or specific port, but in a more holistic approach that integrates maritime and land security, the threat for terrorist acts is extended to the ground too.

---

[209] Klein. (2011). p.172.

Another introduction was made in relation to possible menaces of intimidation of population or against government or international organizations, to do or abstain to do something against the offender. Furthermore, it is considered a crime also the transport of offenders, cooperating with terrorists, or to assist people evading from criminal prosecution.

The right to board and visit suspected ships was introduced in the reform of former article 8 - new article 8bis - of the Convention. The way to arrest the transgressors was a missing point of the SUA Convention of 1988. This inclusion 'Marks a shift from merely providing lawful bases to establish jurisdiction to creating the means to exercise jurisdiction'[210], though it was not taken lightly in regard to fundamental principles. The procedure is limited to cases in which there are 'Reasonable grounds to suspect' that a person on board or a ship is involved in the commission of acts of terrorism. The visit on the ship is subordinated to the consent given from the flag state of the ship, after a defined procedure given from the protocol. This aims to limit the possibility to breach the authority of the flag state of the ship.

This led the United States, before and after the multilateral adoption of the protocol in 2005, to conclude bilateral ship-boarding agreements with states holding largest shipping registers and the greater number of flag vessels under their authority. These bilateral treaties wanted to achieve a higher level of cooperation with other states and create faster procedures for requests to board and visit suspect vessels beyond the territorial sea[211].

The adoption of the second protocol to the 1988 SUA Convention brought relevant innovations in terms of offences, such as the response to threats regarding the proliferation of WMD related to terrorist acts, but also in relation to the right to board and visit ships. The protocol, however, underlined some complications inside the international community. The first point refers to the entry into force of the protocol. Only in 2010, in fact, the memorandum obtained the right number of ratifications to be implemented. This could be seen as a lack of a strong political will, despite the measures advanced also from the Security Council of the United Nations to enhance the cooperation against terrorism and the shared interest to fight against these crimes. Another point to underline is the limitation in board and visit ships, possible only after the authorization of the flag state of the ship. This could create problems in slowing the procedure or some actors could use this right to obstruct boarding, protecting potential terrorists. This could be an important limitation in the prevention of this crime. The issue was bypassed from some states, for example the United States as we have seen, which tried to strengthen the cooperation and to expedite procedures through the instrument of bilateral treaties. It, however, could fragmentate cooperation and diversify the

---

[210] *Ivi* p.174.
[211] *Ivi* p. 184.

application of the treaties at a multilateral level. It is, anyway, a good solution for states that want to increase their security against the threat of terrorism because they feel their interest in danger.

In connection with the issue of shipment of weapons of mass destruction and related material in ocean areas, the United States and other countries launched in 2003 the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). This is not a treaty and originates from no organization. It is a political agreement that aims 'To take steps within existing legal structures to prevent the movement of WMD and related materials between states and non-states actors of proliferation concern'[212]. The intention was to introduce specific actions to prevent the proliferation, in respect of normative framework – both national and international.

The episode, that is recognized as the impulse to the Proliferation Security Initiative, is the one of the *So San*. The latter was a Cambodian vessel caught in the act of carrying Scud missiles from North Korea to Yemen. The Spanish Navy had some doubts about the national origin of the ship and so boarded it to examine documents. Onboard there were some containers which were not registered in the official documents. During the investigations Spanish boarding operators found Scud missiles and related material. Nevertheless, the *So San* was released because Spanish officers had no authority to seize the materials transported and in international law there was no prohibition to deliver such weapons from North Korea to Yemen. The event demonstrated that for international treaties it could not be handled in a different way. To be precise, it could not be administered differently even after the adoption of the PSI, because no new right of visit was introduced in PSI under international law.

The Initiative is considered, according to Klein, a broad multilateral intelligence project, with cooperative actions and coordinating exercise to interdict the proliferation of WMD[213]. The important feature of this project resides in his nature as a political and a cooperative initiative. This permitted more coordination in transferring information and a higher interaction also from an operational point of view. The political nature of the partnership gave the possibility to avoid the problems, and general restrictions, faced instead with international treaties, as the one underlined in the 1988 SUA Convention and its second protocol of 2005. The cooperation imposes no formal structure and states are free to coordinate only in specific episodes related to shipments of WMD. The adoption of this project follows problems regarding the slowness and the deficiencies of the international treaties, which states like the United States wanted to solve.

Today, 105 countries endorsed the Proliferation Security Initiative. Among them 21 are considered core nations as for example Australia, Canada, United States, United Kingdom, Russia, Italy, France, Germany, Japan. They are joined by other 84 endorsing countries. States are asked to participate

---

[212] *Ivi* p.193.
[213] *Ibid.*

based on their willingness to contribute[214]. A Statement of Interdiction Principles has to be adopted from which actors which vessels or territories are considered riskier to be used for proliferation purposes. The presence of elite states, however, could limit the application of the project because, to be effective, it needs a global cooperation of all participants.

A point to underline is that China and India are parties of the Initiative. China, especially, has one of the largest merchant fleets in the world and is an important actor in proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related materials. Even though it stated that its entrance was rejected because the project operates in violation of international law, the real motivation is its narrow relation with North Korea, one of the enemies of the United States[215]. China is the only country allied with North Korea, which is of course one of the states more interested from the cooperation inside the Proliferation Security Initiative, together with Iran and Syria. China, however, stated that the best method to follow to reduce proliferation of weapons of mass destruction was dialogue, and not force.

The targets of PSI are state and non-state actors which are more engaged in proliferation of WMD or related materials, through development, acquisition and transfer. For what concerns states, the United States referred in particular to Syria, Iran and North Korea. John R. Bolton, former US National Security Advisor in president Trump's staff stated that Israel, India and Pakistan were not targeted because they own WMD legitimately and do not pose any threat to the PSI's members[216]. He was criticized a lot for this announcement because many saw a discrimination between states and accused of violation of the principle of sovereign equality under international law. Nevertheless, due to the fact that the Proliferation Security Initiative is a political project, and not a legally binding treaty, they are free to follow a selective line as long as there are no violations to international law. In response, North Korea outlined that every interdiction of its vessels or blockade, would be considered an act of war and for this reason it would have justified the abrogation of the Armistice signed in 1953 at the end of the Korean War.

The PSI, however, is important from two points of view: from one side it increased the coordination and communication between states part of the project to address concerns connected to proliferation of WMD and related materials. From a second point of view, moreover, it helped to understand the lacunae linked to this field inside the international law and could act as an instigator of new legal developments – bilaterally or multilaterally.

In summary, to react to the concern of terrorist acts at sea - against vessels and ports - and the proliferation of WMD, many countries headed from the United States adopted diverse legal tools to

---

[214] *Ivi* p.196.
[215] It was, in fact, considered for the first time in 2008 as a "Rogue State" from the US President's Barack Obama administration.
[216] He made this statement as Under-Secretary of State, in charge from 2001 to 2005, in G. W. Bush administration.

fight the threat. Nevertheless, it was limited from the protection, on part of many states, of the international principle of freedom of navigation and the rights of flagged states on their vessels, despite also the insisting tentative coming from the Security Council, to enhance cooperation between states to solve the problem. This brought to the creation of insufficient instruments to cover the issue. Because of this, states tried to walk the political way through cooperative measures, for instance sharing information or speeding up boarding and visiting procedures. Furthermore, another answer to the threat was found in the conclusion of bilateral treaties between the parties.

These measures, taken against the threats of terrorism and proliferation of weapon of mass destruction, demonstrated inefficient, revealing the necessity of a further development of the normative body.

In this legal framework, navies were exploited in operations of boarding and visiting, under authorization of the flag state of the vessel. Another task was related to the training of Coast Guard, Port Facilities Security Officers, Company Security Officers and Ships Security Officers and in security operations regarding terrorist and traffic of sensible resources. Nevertheless, they kept always a leading role in these operations, and not mere supportive tasks. Another matter in anti-terrorism measures given to the navies was the operations perpetrated from special forces on land, underlining the holistic conception of the actions against the menace of terrorist act. To illustrate, Navy Seals Team 6 was commissioned with the task to capture or kill the international terrorist Osama Bin Laden. The mission was successfully conducted on May 2, 2011.

Another episode of stress was NATO member states invocation for the first time of the article 5[217] on 4 October 2001, after 9/11 terrorist attacks. NATO countries launched Operation Active Endeavour that consisted in the deployment of their naval power in the Eastern Mediterranean in a naval operation, 'Focusing on the interdiction of ships transporting Al Qaeda terrorists, associated persons and materials'[218]. The mission was renovated in 2003 and extended to the whole Mediterranean Sea, hailing over 100 thousand merchant ships and boarding circa 155 suspect vessels[219]. The boarding operations were pursued, according to international law, under the compliance of the ship's master and the flag state of the vessels implicated. In addition to the expansion of the mission and ships that were involved, another important feature was the respect of the international law. Despite launching

---

[217] Article 5 of North Atlantic Treaty (1949): The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.

[218] E. Papastavridis. (2014). *The Interception of Vessels on the High Seas: Contemporary Challenges to the Legal Order of the Oceans*. London. Bloomsbury Publishing. p.128.

[219] *Ibid.*

the operation as a violent response under article 5, thus under the principle of self-defense, in the practical situation NATO went back to peaceful rights and respected international law. To be specific, measures of boarding and visiting suspect vessels were conditioned from the permission of the ship's master and flag states, according to international conventions.

Trafficking of Drugs and Psychotropic substances

Drug trafficking became a problem, in particular from the United States, one of the more active countries in contrasting this crime, from the 1970's. It was considered by many as one of the major threats to national security and economy, after the end of the Cold War. Modern techniques brought an increasing size, complexion and organization of illicit trades that created many issues for states willing to fight against this menace. Moreover, 'Not all coastal states have resources or political will to suppress illicit drug trafficking in their waters'[220]. The better organized drug trafficking organizations are aware of these constraints, as well as of the limitations of states operating in territorial waters of another state according to international law. Narcotics smugglers leverage on this and plan their movement accordingly. The situation became worse after terrorist attacks in New York in 2001 when it was reported that drug trafficking was becoming a transnational organized criminal endeavor, and it was used from terrorists as a source of revenue[221].

With the phenomenon of globalization and the growth in global trade, the United States realized that was increasing the number of foreign vessels which were used to bring narcotics in the country. The initial response was the development of informal procedures and case-by-case agreements to board, visit and seize ships suspected of being involved in drug smuggling. Ad-hoc measures revealed as complicated in particular by determined factors such as weather or time of the day, while Coast Guard had to wait for the permission to board. United States used the method of consensual boarding to overcome these problems, therefore visit operations were conditioned from the acceptance of the master of the ship, whereas other measures like arresting criminals or seizing the ship could be pursued only after the consent of the flag state of the vessel advertised of the controls on board from ship's master. The controversies arose from the use of these measures pushed to conform to alternative methods that were more respectful of flag states' authority[222].

The drug and psychotropic substances traffic are also concerned inside the United States Convention of the Law of the Sea of 1982 at article 108[223] encouraging all states to cooperate in suppression of

---

[220] Klein. (2011). p.312.
[221] *Ivi* p.130.
[222] *Ibid.*
[223] UNCLOS art. 108:

this crime in the high seas. Nevertheless, the Convention does not give any specific right to board, visit or seize vessels suspected to be involved in drug trafficking, a task that is subordinated, as well as for terrorism, to the permission of the flag states. What is consent is that the flag state could ask other countries to help him to take actions against vessels that are suspected to be involved in narcotics trafficking in high seas[224].

The 1988 Vienna Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances was adopted to enhance the cooperation inside the international community to suppress the illicit drug trafficking on the high seas, as requested by UNCLOS. While article 3 of the 1988 Convention specifies diverse narcotics trafficking offences, the article 4 expresses the necessity for countries to set national jurisdiction against these offences, specifically when they are committed on board of a flag ship or through an aircraft registered under its laws, at the time when the act was committed[225].

Moreover, the 1988 Convention requires a cooperation of states in the field superior to the one included in the article 108 of UNCLOS. This Convention also sets the possibility to intercept a craft, reasonably suspected of being involved in acts of drug smuggling, even if it is not under his authority as flag state. Nevertheless, there is no appointing authority to visit foreign suspected vessels. Article 17 of 1988 Convention[226], in fact, sets up the procedure to ask the flag state for permission to board a ship of another state party when it is in the high seas. This authorization could be received in the case ad hoc or through bilateral agreements concluded by two states parties to the Convention[227].

The Geneva Convention also set the prominent position of the flag state in the high seas. It detains the power to accept or refuse boarding operations on a ship under its authority. Moreover, there is no precise time frame defined by article 17 of the Convention for the acceptance of boarding, it prescribes only that the consent has to be given as fast as possible from flag state. Protection are included also for what concerns the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of a state granted from UNCLOS[228]. In this area coastal states benefit from particular jurisdiction and rights – exploitation of the resources in the seabed and its subsoil, scientific exploration, protection of the environment – that need to be defended from international law. Therefore, the 1988 Convention configures

---

1. All States shall cooperate in the suppression of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances engaged by ships on the high seas contrary to international conventions.
2. Any State which has reasonable grounds for believing that a ship flying its flag is engaged in illicit traffic in narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances may request the cooperation of other States to suppress such traffic.

[224] Klein. (2011). p. 131.

[225] *Ibid.*

[226] Art. 17 para 1 of the 1988 Vienna Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic drugs and Psychotropic Substances: 'The Parties shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible to suppress illicit traffic by sea, in conformity with the international law of the sea'.

[227] Klein. (2011). pp. 131-132.

[228] 200 miles from the base line as defined from Part V of the 1982 Convention.

limitations to avoid interference with the enjoyment for coastal states of the advantages coming from this zone.

In summary, we need to stress that the normative framework drawn up from the 1988 Vienna Convention does not express the definitive statement to suppress drug trafficking. The regulatory text, in fact, expressly makes reference to previous agreements between states in the field and, in the same time, draws up the guidelines to conduct states to the conclusion of new agreements, either bilateral as well as multilateral.

To illustrate, one earlier agreement was the one between the United States and the United Kingdom signed in 1981, that permitted the interdiction of British-flagged vessels in designated areas - Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean - if suspected to be involved in drug smuggling crimes. Same rights were not given, on contrary to the United Kingdom against any United States' ships. This agreement could be described as 'A significant departure from the customary rule that on the high seas jurisdiction follows the flag'[229]. To be specific, consent to board, visit and seize vessels was given in advance, so no authorization was needed before acting and it could be immediate. The only limit to this was the fact that the only justification was prove provided by the United States authorities – the US Coast Guards in this specific case – that there were reasonable suspects of the involvement of the ship in criminal behavior. A precaution taken to avoid the conduction of random boardings.

The United States authorities before starting a boarding operation of a suspected vessel have to take the necessary steps to control the registration of the vessels and only whether there is a serious suspect of the involvement of the crew in criminals' affairs they can act. They are entitled to seize ships too, if they find any violation to US laws. The United Kingdom reserved the right of object and exercised its jurisdiction over its nationals eventually arrested in these operations.

In response to illicit trafficking of narcotics, the United States pursued a series of legal strategies at a national as well as in cooperation with other states. In this latter field of action, to overcome the limit of international conventions that subordinated boarding operations to the consent of flag states, the United States concluded bilateral agreements with other states such as with countries of the area of Caribbean and South America, notorious for their cartels of drug smugglers.

In these treaties was established the technique of the "ship-raiders" 'Whereby an official of one state would be placed on a US Coast Guard vessel so that the official, riding with the Coast Guard, could authorize interdictions of any of its vessels, as well as allow for pursuit in the territorial seas of that official's state and for the United States to commence hot pursuit in the official's territorial sea[230]. For the counterpart of the agreement the advantage is a more effective patrol of its territorial waters

---

[229] Klein. (2011). pp. 132-133.
[230] *Ivi* p.134.

and enforcing of national laws. These agreements permit also the boarding of ships which claim to be flagged from one of the two states and are reasonably suspected of pursuing crimes related to drug traffic. Security operations are prosecuted with high attention not to prejudice the commercial and legal interest of the flag state. The use of force is consented also in cases of self-defense to maintain order on board during visiting operations or arresting drug smugglers. Thanks to these bilateral agreements, law enforcement efforts are ensured more effectively.

Another similar agreement that permits ship boarding in relation to traffic of narcotics is the 1995 Council of Europe's Agreement on Illicit Traffic by Sea. This is connected to the 1988 Vienna Convention and seems to improve some requirements of the same international Convention. In the article 6 of the 1995 Convention, however, it stressed the need for the authorization of the flag state before boarding the vessel. It disposes that the consent has to be given 'Whenever practicable within four hours'[231], whilst tacit consent is given when flag states fail to give the permission in the four hours. Nevertheless, the flag state has the authority to give or deny the permission to board one of his ships.

The boarding vessel, which receives the consent, has the right to stop, board, and search for any evidence of eventual crimes committed by the ship's crew. Furthermore, the permission is given to take some of them to the official's port to investigate the case more thoroughly. The right to arrest members of the crew and seize the ship is subordinated to finding the evidence that the offence was committed. Flag state, moreover, has to be advised immediately and has the priority in the case of concurring jurisdictions.

In 2003 it was signed the Caribbean Agreement, between the United States and Caribbean countries, which was a supplement to the 1988 Vienna Convention. A particular attention was given to the implementation of article 17 of 1988 Convention. This was seen as too restrictive for their context in which rapid vessels could easily escape from territorial seas whereas authorities were engaged in looking for the permission of the flag state to act. This, innovative and ambitious, agreement includes the detailed provision for law enforcement operations, also in territorial waters of states parties. It also considers cases of drug trafficking by air. It includes the use of the method of ship-raiders to provide authority on air and on sea. All states parties of the Agreement of 2003, consequently, are encouraged – not obliged - to select one official authority to embark on their law enforcement vessels.

An important part of the inspection is the recognition of the nationality of the suspected that has to be understood as soon as possible. The convention foresees a time of four hours to find the suspect's nationality. The convention allows nations parties of the Agreement to board and visit a ship, flagged under one of the State Party to the treaty without his case-by-case permission. Anyway, countries

---

[231] *Ivi* p.135.

were able at the moment of the conclusion of the Agreement to request for the permission before boarding the vessel or create a system in which consent is tacit if there is no response within a four hours period. Flag states maintain, however, the primary jurisdiction over possible seized vessels or people arrested, unless this right was explicitly ceded in the moment of the ratification of the Agreement.

With this acquiescence seems that countries balanced the necessity to board ships suspected of being involved in traffic of narcotics with principles of freedom of navigation and foremost relevance of the control, for flag state, over his vessels. This process was obtained with the definition of specific limitations to the timing and to the method for pursuing visiting operations. In general, however, what was considered a central issue and a shared interest of the international community, as the drug trafficking, was subordinated to the respect of international law and interests of nations, especially for what concerns multilateral agreements. Furthermore, in this context appeared evident the need to implement the subject through the stipulation of other agreements, mostly bilateral or regional.

Slavery, People Smuggling and trafficking

The abolition of slavery was a campaign started, more or less, in the Eighteenth century and was led from Britain, the superpower of the period. The country promoted the abolition with all possible measures encouraging the establishment of a custom inside international law. In this road to the abolition of slavery Britain found many adversaries, in particular many states that were not keen to abandon this practice which brought many from an economic point of view. Due to this, the enforcement of law in this field proceeded in particular through the stipulation of many bilateral agreements. These bilateral treaties gave the possibility to board and visit vessels which were suspected to be involved in slaves trafficking. The limit was that no measure could be taken against a foreign vessel, in the specific case when flag states did not give the corresponding authorization.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea resumes this task of preventing slaves trafficking. In article 110 of the Convention[232] is recognized the possibility to board and visit a foreign ship in the high seas, which is reasonably suspected of being involved in slave trades. There has been no progress in doctrine, therefore there is a distinction of boarding and visiting operation and seizing or eventually taking measures in front of a proven involvement of a foreign ship in slave trafficking. The situation is different, instead, for what regards own ships. Here the Convention in article 99

---

[232] Article 110 para 1 of UNCLOS: Except where acts of interference derive from powers conferred by treaty, a warship which encounters on the high seas a foreign ship, other than a ship entitled to complete immunity in accordance with articles 95 and 96, is not justified in boarding it unless there is reasonable ground for suspecting that:
(b) the ship is engaged in the slave trade;

provides the obligation for states to take all possible measures to suppress this criminal behavior, in particular the one trafficking in their own territorial waters. In summary, for what concerns the abolition of slavery only flag states have the possibility to enforce measures for the prohibition, along the lines of the traditional paradigm of the protection of the principle of freedom of navigation.

Conversely, there is a different position for what concerns 'What is often considered a modern version of slavery: people smuggling and trafficking'[233]. It was estimated that around four million people every year are involved in this crime and that the annual earn for trafficking was 5-7 billion US dollars. A distinction ought to be made between people trafficking and people smuggling. The latter involves people who are asylum seekers and are pursuing illegal routes to enter in a country. People trafficking, instead, are subjected to coercion or depiction in illegally entering in a country, to whom it might follow an exploitation also when inside the country of arrival. Slavery and people trafficking involve, in general, smuggling.

People smuggling is seen as a threat from the hosting nation in particular for problems related to the identification of these people. The concern is connected to their possible criminal convictions or health's status, logistical problems, costs as well as the violation for state's sovereignty over its country and its coasts[234]. A concern is linked to the fact that these migration routes for the majority of the time transport an excessive number of people, without taking accurate security measures. As a consequence, many states took diverse measures against the issue.

Addressing the topic of migration smuggling at sea must be considered the difficulties of people who left their countries as well as refugees' laws, for instance the principle of *non-refoulement*[235]. If a ship is boarded in high seas, states should conform to this principle specifically because human beings are at the center of the approaches to people smuggling and trafficking[236].

An initial response, with interim non-binding measures, was taken by IMO in 1998 to combat unsafe practice related to transportation of migrants by sea. In compliance with the 1974 SOLAS Convention, among the recommendations there was the collection and dissemination of details regarding ships involved, or suspected to be involved, in migrant trafficking.

Moreover, other recommendations were given to take appropriate measures against ships involved and to prevent, in particular in ports, that ships could engage such unsafe practices. States were obliged to take measures in conformity with the international law of the sea.

---

[233] Klein. (2011). p.123.

[234] *Ibid.*

[235] Which is defined in article 33 para 1 of the 1949 Geneva Convention relating to the status of Refugees as: 'No Contracting State shall expel or return *("refouler")* a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, member- ship of a particular social group or political opinion'.

[236] Klein. (2011). p. 314.

IMO recommendations extended also to possible actions and procedures for suppression. To be specific, IMO considers the possibility that a flag state could ask another to help against one of his own vessels suspected to be involved in acts of migrant trafficking. Other recommendations concern the possibility for foreign states to board and visit a suspected foreign ship. This possibility is, however, subordinated to the consent of the flag state. These recommendations, for their non-legally binding nature, do not give the power to start visiting operations in high seas. this power, instead, is given from UNCLOS as an international Convention.

In 2000 it adopted the Convention on Transnational Crime with a specific protocol, the Migrant Smuggling Protocol, that relates in particular to this issue. The aim of this protocol is 'To prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants as well as to promote cooperation among States Parties to that end, while protecting the right of smuggled migrants'[237]. As a consequence, that protocol requires, for States Parties, to criminalize a series of acts and among this also migrant smuggling[238] itself. A limitation to this protocol could be individuated in the fact that such this act has to be transnational and involve an organized criminal group.

A particular section, the second, of the protocol is dedicated to migrant smuggling at sea, in which are contained some obligations for states such as the one to cooperate as fully as possible in prohibition of the migrant smuggling at sea, taking into account the obligations posed by the international law. In the protocol is added also a boarding provision that, in a certain way, follows the guidelines defined from IMO in 1998. In dealing with a stateless vessel or own vessels, a flag state could ask other states parties for help. Whether he is not obliged to ask for help, inside the convention is included for other nations the obligation to cooperate with the flag state that stands in a difficult condition. Obviously, this assistance is limited in their means. States could take, against stateless vessels, appropriate measures according to national and international law.

A state party that has reasonable grounds to suspect that a foreign vessel is involved in migrant smuggling, after having received the authorization from the flag state, could take measures of boarding and visiting the ship. If evidence is found it could take appropriate actions, as long as they are taken according with the flag state and they respect people and goods on board. In this sense there is a preservation of the principle of freedom of navigation. On the contrary, if suspicions prove to be unfounded following operations of boarding and visiting of a vessel, the latter has to be compensated for any loss or damage. Moreover, during the mission attention has to be paid to prevent the infliction of prejudices to legal and commercial interests as well as the production of damages to the

---

[237] *Ivi* p. 125.
[238] Smuggling is defined as the procurement, both in a direct or indirect way, of financial benefit from the illegal entry of a person in a country of which the person is not national.

environment of the flag state or any other interested state. These operations could be made also in domestic waters of the flag states, under his authorization.

The 2000 Protocol requires flag states to facilitate these measures, responding as quickly as possible to the request for details about the registered vessel or to give the authorization to apply measures against one of his ships. In this purpose the flag state could appoint a special official with the task to give this permission.

In summary, the 2000 Protocol takes inspiration from the traditional law, from the general principles of freedom of navigation and from the rights of the flag states to regulate this field. Consequently, a state could board and visit foreign ships only after the authorization of the flag state of the vessel.

In addition, regional efforts were made to fight against this menace. These endeavors have taken the shape of bilateral treaties or cooperative political arrangements. To illustrate, in 2002 it created the Bali Process among 38 states from throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The aim of this project is to create a cooperation among states in sharing information and intelligence. It tried to enhance the cooperation between agencies and combat people smuggling and trafficking, at the same time it enacted the national laws to criminalize this type of criminal conduct. The Bali Process does not provide a legal framework but tries to improve practical capabilities of state parties, especially, through a targeted capacity building.

Countries who are particularly affected from the issue of migrant smuggling, in general, are used to sign bilateral agreements with countries of departure to enhance law enforcement efforts. Bilateral agreements, in particular, are directed to increase protection, to a more secure cooperation, to prevent the problem or to agree on terms of asylum or rejection, except if there is no manifest violation to the 1949 Geneva Convention connected with the status of the refugees.

In summary, even though the 2000 Migrant Smuggling Protocol has given some sign of the need to change, especially for what concerns the matter of boarding and visiting operation, the international community is not interested for the moment in changing his legal response - on a multilateral level - against migration smuggling and trafficking, subordinating it to the principles of freedom of navigation and the authority of flag states.

An occasion in which there have been observed problems related to the application of these norms is in the recent case of the impressive flux of migrants that crossed the Mediterranean from the coasts of North Africa arriving in the European continent, accessing in particular Italian and Greek coasts. After an accident happened in summer 2013 in the Mediterranean, and due to the growing rate of deaths in the area, the Italian government alone launched an ambitious mission, *Mare Nostrum*, to save lives of migrants passing through Sicilian channel and to arrest the smugglers. This operation, which lasted one year involved the *Marina militare* with one amphibious ship, two corvettes ships

and two patrollers together with several airplanes and helicopters. The results achieved from this mission were of circa 160 thousand migrants saved and 366 smugglers brought to justice.

The Italian mission was substituted the following year from the mission *Triton*, this time deployed from the EU agency *Frontex*[239]*,* that involved 15 to 28 EU member states. This mission had the aim to help the patrol of Italian coasts and, in certain circumstances, to save migrants' lives in the SAR – search and rescue – area. This mission was, however, considered insufficient because it, unlike former mission *Mare Nostrum* that extended up to Libyan coasts, stretched in an area of only 30 miles from Italian coasts. It was limited in means employed as well as in his budget. This was earned from a voluntary contribution collected from member states.

As a consequence, *Triton* was replaced by a new mission called *Themis* in 2018, always promoted from the agency *Frontex*. This is a broader mission that includes principally the whole central area of the Mediterranean collecting fluxes coming from all countries of the northern part of Africa. The main aim of this new mission is to search and rescue migrants, conducting them in the nearest and safest port. Moreover, the mission has the purpose to help Italy to find migrant smugglers and drug traffickers in the Mediterranean as well as terrorists affiliated to the terrorist cells of Daesh[240]. This target, specifically, is prosecuted through the enforcement of the sharing information and intelligence to find terrorist menaces present in North-African coasts.

Another mission inside the sphere of the European Union, this time not related only to patrol and protection of coasts but a real military operation, is operation *EUNAVFOR med- Sophia*. This operation, launched by European Council on Foreign Relations on the 22 of June 2015, has the main aim to 'To undertake systematic efforts to identify, capture and dispose of vessels and enabling assets used or suspected of being used by migrant smugglers or traffickers, in order to contribute to wider EU efforts to disrupt the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean and prevent the further loss of life at sea'[241]. The Italian-led mission has involved the use of helicopters, aircrafts and 7 ships - one Italian, the *San Giorgio*, two Spanish, one French, one German, one Belgian and one British - from 26 actively participating EU countries[242]. In October 2015 the mission switched to its second phase that consists in operations of boarding,

---

[239] European Borders and Coast Guard agency.

[240] Arabic-language acronym of the terrorist organization and of the former unrecognized proto-state, also known as ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) or ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), that from 2014 were under the domination over important cities in Iraq and in Syria, like Mosul or Raqqa. A dominion which was preserved until 2019 when an international coalition under the leadership of the United States, in particular with airstrike campaigns as well as weapons, training and supplies, helped to vanquish the organization and to restore the *status quo ante*. Terrorist cells in Europe belonging to Daesh were responsible for terrorist attacks such as the 2015 attacks on the offices of the satirical weekly newspaper Charlie Hebdo or the shooting inside Bataclan's Theatre in Paris or the 2017 terrorist bombing in a concert in Manchester.

[241] https://www.operationsophia.eu/about-us/.

[242] Only two EU member states do not participate actively, Denmark and Slovakia.

visiting and seizing ships on the high seas which are suspected of being used for human smuggling and trafficking. The idea is to extend these operations to territorial seas, after the consent of Libyan government and following a specific Resolution of the UN Security Council. From July 2017 the mission was extended to the tasks of training personnel of the Libyan Coast Guard and, under United Nations support, to contribute to the implementation of UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coasts of Libya[243]. Nevertheless, on March 2019 operation *EUNAVFOR med* was closed from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Protection of the the Marine and Coastal Environment

While environmental harm to a maritime area, according to Klein, 'may have severe social, economic, and political consequences for the adjacent communities and persons or industries otherwise dependent on that marine area, it is intentional damage rather than accidental damage that was identified as a maritime security threat by the UN Secretary-General'[244]. As the maritime pollution could cause problems also from other countries of the region, other than the coastal state, as well as for ships that navigate that waters, this should have been considered an important risk even if it was caused unintentionally.

Prior to the establishment of the EEZ[245], the possibility for coastal states to respond to threats regarding environmental emergencies were limited. This concern found, in fact, the opposition of states that protected the principle of freedom of navigation and saw in the prosecution of this task a limitation to the principle considered as fundamental. The lack of powers given to coastal states to protect their environment was highlighted from the grounding of the *Torrey Canyon* in 1967. In this case, the United Kingdom, to reduce possible damage to his sea environment, was obliged to bombard the wrecked vessel and ignite the oil.

IMO has adopted a series of standards that nations have to respect to protect the maritime environment. To be specific, treaties were concluded on vessel pollution, dumping at sea and maritime casualties. Actually, no enforcement of power was established in these treaties. The matter is now regulated from UNCLOS.

Under UNCLOS, as stated by Klein, 'Coastal states are accorded increased powers to devise regulations over all sources of pollution in light of their recognized jurisdiction for the protection and preservation of marine environment'[246]. This growth of power for coastal states, however, was always

---

[243] Under UN Security Council's Resolutions 2292 (2016) and 2357 (2017).
[244] Klein. (2011). p.318.
[245] This was in particular defined, as mentioned before, in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
[246] Klein. (2011). p.93.

limited from the observance of the rights of flag states. One of the major developments here was the possibility for coastal states to respond to eventual maritime casualties that risk creating a prejudice to the environment, as it could be considered from international law a violation of the principle of innocent passage enforced by article 27 of UNCLOS.

States had, already, adopted an international treaty in 1969, the Marine Casualties Convention, to permit measures in the high seas to limit possible damages of coast states and related interests from pollution caused by oil losses. In 1973 a protocol[247] to the 1969 treaty canceled the limitation to act against threats caused from oil pollution, covering a wider range of substances which are drawn up by a specifically designated body[248]. For the protocol states parties taking actions are obliged to consult experts and notify affected parties. Under this Convention, every action must be proportioned to damage, actual or potential, as well as reasonably necessary. As Klein reported, 'If measures do not meet these criteria then the intervening party shall be obliged to pay compensation to the extent of the damage caused by measures which exceed those reasonably necessary'[249].

In the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982 it was partially adopted the same line introduced with the convention of 1969. Moreover, in the article 221[250] of 1982 Convention modifications were included which allowed a greater range of action for coastal states. These measures do not require a grave and imminent damage but only actual or threatened damage that could cause worse consequences. The Convention also gives the possibility to prescribe laws on different sources of pollution, other than oil, unless they are in accordance with international standards. Because of this, states started to adopt strict requirements for vessels navigating through their EEZ to obtain a better protection of their environment. What remains is a stringent limitation of cases in which the coastal state can take action. Specifically, UNCLOS subordinates the measures taken from coastal states to some requirements as the presence of clear grounds of believing that vessels violated relevant rules and standards in the EEZ. These powers are limited from, in first stance, the request of all the relevant details to the vessels - with a thorough examination of registers – and, in second stance, by taking a physical examination onboard only if there is a substantial discharge that causes pollution or if ship's master refuses to give information or gives documentation which proves manifestly unfounded.

---

[247] Protocol relating to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Marine Pollution by Substances other than Oil.
[248] The body acts under the auspices of IMO.
[249] Klein. (2011). p.94.
[250] Article 221 para 1 of UNCLOS: 'Nothing in this Part shall prejudice the right of States, pursuant to international law, both customary and conventional, to take and enforce measures beyond the territorial sea proportionate to the actual or threatened damage to protect their coastline or related interests, including fishing, from pollution or threat of pollution following upon a maritime casualty or acts relating to such a casualty, which may reasonably be expected to result in major harmful consequences.

A vessel, or members of the crew, could be detained only if there is clear evidence of pollution violation that caused a major damage to the environment. actually, the ship could continue its route even if there are investigations in course. The flag states reserve the possibility to stop any procedure against one of his vessels while he takes actions.

In conclusion, in spite of the advancing of the doctrine in this sense, which detracted from the typical respect for the authority of the flag states, these last continued to proceed in enforcing international rules and standards to their vessels. As a consequence, they 'Continue to have a critical role in addressing threats to the marine environment'[251]. Therefore, it would appear that there has been an insufficient concern regarding maritime pollution to guarantee a reallocation of policing powers on the high seas at this point.

---

[251] Klein. (2011). p.95.

CHAPTER 4 TODAY'S DOCTRINE OF THE ROYAL NAVY

In this chapter thanks to the analysis of the Fundamentals of British maritime doctrine, I am going to investigate thoroughly what influences the strategic thought of the Royal Navy. Starting with an investigation of the principles of maritime warfare, I am going to research which are the most common type of operations and means of the Royal Navy to understand the points on which the national strategic doctrine has focused more. In my perspective, this could be grasped from a deep examination of the operations in which they put more attention but, also, by the means, present and future, that this force employed or forecasts to put into force in their actions. At the end of the chapter, I am going to analyze why this force is so important for an island like the United Kingdom, especially reviewing the attributes of today's navies that make it so different and, besides special, from other military forces of the country.

Doctrine, as described in Fundamentals of British Maritime doctrine, is 'A framework of principles, practices and procedures, understanding of which provides a basis of action'[252] that influence all levels of military planning starting with grand strategy and military strategy passing through the tactical level until the operational level. Doctrine affects the preparation of the whole navy, both ships and men, for example, teaching and training and, besides this, helps to form the conception of the peculiar nature of the maritime environment and how it works concretely. The conception of doctrine is a historical process that originates from studies, analysis and interpretations of past events that mould the experience. This last is a relevant starting point for future actions. Nevertheless, as mentioned in the Fundamentals of maritime doctrine, 'It is important to prevent it becoming a dogma'[253], meaning that it ought not to be considered as static, but it ought to be adapted to the specific situation as the political and military framework changes during the years. We have seen, for instance, the significant changes happened to the strategic vision caused by the technological progress that resulted in different weapons and, because of it, in a different vision of the battles and of the utilization that could be made of the military apparatus.

In this context, it is fundamental to tell the difference between naval and maritime doctrine. Whereas the first is related to the mere use of naval forces, the second concept, maritime doctrine, has a wider conception. It, indeed, has a more joint nature in the sense that it is a contribution of all three forces: air, sea and land forces. In today's British operation the prevalence is given to joint use of all forces interconnected in their functions. In British maritime doctrine, the fulcrum of a successful operation is the effective combination of whole forces.

---

[252] Command of Defence Council (1995). p. 12.
[253] *Ivi* p.13.

Furthermore, another element must be stressed. After the end of the Second World War, but it was viewable also after the First World War, that marks the closure of the so-called age of the *Pax Britannica* and the decline of the British empire, as well as the downfall of Britain from world hegemonic power. With the beginning of the conflictual time of the Cold War, that collocated at the centre the two superpowers that won the war - United States and the Soviet Union - United Kingdom assumed a secondary role in the international community, especially for what concerns military capacities. The change in the balance of power obliged Britain and other countries in Europe to cooperate, which was considered the only way to have a weight in the international framework. Therefore, it led to the creation of organizations to pursue this purpose, such as the Western European Union (WEU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) originated respectively from the modified Brussels treaty of 1948 and the Washington Treaty of 1949[254]. The United Kingdom understood his inferiority in front of the excessive military capacities of the United States, and so adapted to the situation. In this regard is important how these facts changed British maritime doctrine, as well as his strategic vision, in a consideration of joint operations inside an alliance of nations and careful research of the way to maintain a primary role inside of this. So, there was no more a focus on national security itself, conducted as a single country interested only in the safety of its territories, on the contrary, they started thinking as a more coordinated set of forces.

What the book[255] shows evidently is the increasing attention paid to the alliances, that for instance brought a concentration of training sessions or the same construction of means, that are all addressed to better coordination of forces inside possible more shared scenarios.

In the national security policy of 1995 are identified three defence roles and, inside these categories, seven military tasks are grouped. They are called Roles 1, 2 and 3, however, their order does not reflect any priority. Defence Role 1 focuses on the preservation of the security of the United Kingdom and Dependent Territories, both if they are present or not a major threat to national life or interests. In this sense, high emphasis is given to 'An effective independent strategic and sub-strategic nuclear capability'[256] which is considered the key of this defensive role and, besides, safeguards a general

---

[254] North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a multinational security organization with political discussion, integrated command and dedicated infrastructure and support. During the Cold War, his main task was to counteract the alliance of Easter and Central Europe countries on the other side of the iron curtain, members of the Warsaw Pact of 1955. After the came down of the Berlin Wall and the definitive collapse of the Soviet Union, that marked the end of the Cold War, NATO lost its meaning and it should have been reconsidered. In 1991, hence, was published the new strategic concept that gave a broader approach to the entire organization. This site was fundamentally guided from an introduction of dialogue with counterparts of Eastern and Central Europe and a worldwide way of the operations. The latter in particular marked the inclusion of the integrated forces of NATO in operations outside the countries inside the organization, with significant participation, as a means under the political directions of the United Nations, and in particular of the Security Council, in operations of peacekeeping and peace enforcing.
[255] Referring to Fundamentals of British Maritime Doctrine.
[256] Command of Defence Council (1995). p.25.

primacy inside the consideration of the entire maritime doctrine. Other tasks are the reinforcement of military aid to the civil power in the country and reinforcement of Dependent Territories.

Defence Role 2 is directed to protect the country, and allies, from external menaces. The tasks are prosecuted mainly inside NATO which has organized a system of flexible, mobile and multi-national forces that are capable of carrying on tasks all over the world and in a different spectrum of conflicts[257]. In NATO there is a distinction of forces differentiated from the rate of employability and different crises to which they could be assigned. To be specific, there is, for example, a Multinational NATO Maritime Forces (MNMF) which are organized in specific formations, involving military apparatus of diverse countries, and is the primary maritime crisis response force.

Defence Role 3 is the prosecution of the aim to protect the United Kingdom's interests, through the preservation of principles of peace and security. The tasks belonging to this role are lower intensity and longer duration conflicts. They are pursued or by means of the country's forces or inside multinational coalitions. The tasks included in this role are prosecuted, for the majority of the cases, under the auspices of the United Nations.

Principles of war

Fundamentals of British Maritime Doctrine dedicated to the Principles of war a great space inserting a specific annex, Annex A, at the end of the book in which all principles are thoroughly analyzed. As the application of strategies and military force is both a science and an art, and because this art is influenced by the experience, own and of others, leaders should learn and use the experience as an ability to address operational situations. Principles are, precisely, a 'Distillation of experience and simplification of complex and sometimes contradictory ideas'[258]. They are broad concepts that inspire both strategic vision and the operational organization in the combat field. The United Kingdom recognizes ten main principles of war. They are common for all the forces and they are selection and prosecution of the aim, maintenance of morale, offensive action, surprise, security, the concentration of force, the economy of effort, flexibility, cooperation and administration.

Every single principle must be specifically investigated to understand their nature.

The first one, Selection and maintenance of the aim is the element that has to stay at the centre of the whole operation. The supreme goal, the one to which the whole endeavour is directed, is generally targeted to 'Break the will of the enemy to initiate war or to continue fighting once war has started'[259].

---

[257] Spectrum of conflict is a term that signifies a full range of possible situations in which military forces could be involved. They go from a peaceful situation to a nuclear dispute.
[258] Command of Defence Council (1995). p.46.
[259] *Ivi* p. 185.

In this feature of the battle is evident the connection with Clausewitz's doctrine of limited warfare, and also Corbett regained it from a naval point of view, in which the central end of the battle is not the complete destruction of the enemy, rather it is the achievement of his surrender. It is fundamental that the Commander, at every single time, focuses only on a single purpose and his approach must be mirrored by lower grade commanders. This target is pursued with all means from all members of the force as a whole. This is considered the "Main principle" of all military operational contexts. The other principles, in fact, have a subordinate position due to the respective type of operational context in which they are considered.

The maintenance of morale is relevant to achieve the purpose, at the end of the battle, but is important to continue to fight too. Morale is the product of different elements like the understanding of the aim of the battle, self-confidence and respect and trust on the leadership. At the same time, it is the source of important characteristics that could help in a conflictual context. Morale, to be specific, gives energy, skill and the courage to inspire the offensive and to continue the war effort. As it is remarked also in the book, nowadays, it is central for morale, but affects the whole campaign in general, to have the support of the public opinion, both of the internal and international community. To illustrate, this was obvious from the Vietnam campaign on, when the loss of the favour of the internal public opinion, as well as the international one, played the role of a definitive factor that brought to the defeat of the United States. Therefore, the United Kingdom is conscious of this, having fought in Vietnam for a short amount of time.

A virtuous model here could be just the one employed by the United Kingdom in the '50s in Malaysia, against a Maoist rebellion in the region. They discovered that the rebellion had the support of only a small part of the population, precisely the part of Chinese ethnic. British authorities in the region took this minority apart from the rest of the population, which was awarded more benefits. Then, they gave economic incentives to the part of the population that sustained the rebels, weakening the opponents and, finally, they used a small military effort to defeat the rest of the rebels already deprived of the support of the population.

Public opinion's view became important for two orders of factors. Firstly, the growth of cases involving a new type of warfare, the asymmetric one. They were fought, in the majority of the cases, between a state actor and belligerents with a significantly lower military capacity. The weaker combatants, in this context, try to use the stronger military power of the opponent for their own advantage, for example causing an exceeding reaction from the states which, as a consequence, produces a hostile reaction of the public opinion and, consequently, a loss of support on the bases of the mission in general. This was clear in the just mentioned example of the Vietnam campaign, but it

was used also on the failed international mission in Somalia in 1993[260] in which the same United Nations' reputation was mined. The use of this type of warfare was strengthened from 2001 when the United States launched its war on terror. Although terrorist's behaviour is different from belligerent one, they borrowed the same principle to cause the withdrawal of the United States and international contingent sent in Afghanistan or in Iraq.

Secondly, with the progress of technology and, then, due to globalization, there has been a spread of information and an increasing function of the media in the position of influencing public opinion's sight. Nations tried to mend this issue by filtering information coming from the battlefield, accurately selected from the Strategic Command. However, this was impossible for two orders of reasons: the complete limitation of media is not possible in democratic societies, and because of the spread of international communication and free access to foreign television broadcasters, as Al Jazeera or the same BBC.

Another principle to focus on is the offensive action. The offensive is 'The chief means open to a commander to influence the outcome of a campaign or battle'[261], that gives to the attacker the initiative and more freedom in securing the decision. Closely linked to the morale, the offensive embodies a state of mind. Thanks to this it could be gained confidence in soldiers and leverage on the enemy. This principle recalls the considerations made by Clausewitz, who explained the superiority of the defence over offence. Nevertheless, for British maritime doctrine, considering the progress of technology which occurred in these years - that transformed weapons and means - is, instead, stated the reversed thesis of the superiority of offence over defence. In today's strategic context, both in war and peacetime, the defensive conception was influenced by the intricacy of the maritime environment and its tripartite division: surface, sub-surface and air. Therefore, defensive thought has to bear in mind the possibility to receive an attack from one of these, as well as all of these, dimensions. Attack, instead, could benefit from the initiative and the surprise effect which gives an advantage, causing problems and confusing enemy troops, impacting their morale, too[262].

Surprise, as we have just seen, is fundamental to influence the condition of the struggle. It gives the possibility to achieve outcomes out of all proportions, affecting enormously the result of the conflict. It has different elements inside like secrecy, deception, originality, boldness and velocity.

---

[260] The mission United Task Force (Unified Task Force) was a mission conducted in Somalia, under the auspices of the United Nations to fix the situation of chaos and starvation created in the country. It substituted the previous failed mission United Nation Operation in Somalia I (UNSOM I). The mission led by the United States involved other countries such as Italy, Belgium, India, Pakistan, Australia and the United Kingdom. The duration was from 1992 to May 1993 when it was substituted by a new operation called United Nation Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II), sadly famous for the battle of Mogadishu and the consequent withdrawal of the international contingent in 1995.
[261] Command of Defence Council (1995). p. 185.
[262] *Ivi* pp. 76-77.

The principle of security is related to the protection of own forces against attacks or eventual surprises from the opponent's forces. In a conflict, of course, it is impossible to avoid all risks. Security principle, hence, means a foreseen and acceptance of eventual risks. The acceptance of risks is not a breach on the principle, whereas it could be a split not to realize they are being taken.

The concentration of forces is also a principle extrapolated from the reflections of Clausewitz, who was inspired by the successful strategy put in place by Napoleon. It consists of the concentration of a superior force against the enemy at the right time and place. It does not mean, however, 'The massing of forces in one place, but rather their deployment to enable the decisive blow to be delivered when and where required'[263]. This principle is central in the art of war considered as the individuation of the target, decision of the tasks to reach the aim and, at the end, the concentration of the required forces until the purpose is not achieved.

The principle of the economy of the effort is, in a certain way, related to the previous one. it consists of balanced use of forces and judicious spending of the resources available to achieve the aim. It helps the concentration of the resources and of the forces when they are needed in the right place and time to win.

The flexibility is claimed during the whole conflict. It consists, for instance, on the ability, demanded to the Commander and his subordinates, to change his premeditated plans to meet different conditions or unexpected developments. Flexibility is important also before the launching of the mission in the moment of the analysis of the information gained, for example from the intelligence services. Amongst the competencies requested to the commander there is the ability to tell wrong and truth details but also to shift his view at the moment in which the situation changes and reveals as completely different. This implies a good training and discipline of the staff, together with a flexibility of mind and rapidity of decision. Moreover, it is influenced also from rates of physical mobility in the way that it could be changed the position of forces rapidly and as cost-effective as possible. This principle, in conclusion, concerns the rapidity to adapt decisions in order both to face threats and catch all possible opportunities.

Cooperation means, in a conflictual context, coordination. It could regard units or forces. In the last case, it is the opportunity to accomplish something 'Which neither could achieve separately'[264]. To respect this principle is necessary, from each part of the coordination at different levels of units, forces or allies, good-will and desire to cooperate.

The last, but not least, the principle of British Maritime Doctrine is administration. It is a prerequisite of the success of all types of operations. An aspect, often underestimated, is the one regarding

---

[263] *Ivi* p.186.
[264] *Ivi* p. 187.

planning an adequate logistic. No operation can succeed without administrative support appropriate to the needs to reach the purpose. Therefore, the commander-in-chief must have a suitable control of the resources, as he has of the entire mission. Principle of flexibility has an influence also on the administration that has to be able to react to eventual changes in the situation, following the most cost-effective use of supplies possible. It was evident for example in the case of the Falklands War of 1982, where long lines of communication as well as a battle unforeseeable in terms of duration, 'Logistics were inevitably a dominant concern of operational and tactical commanders'[265]. Although the serious problems caused by long lines of communication, the sustained reach was excellently demonstrated.

To these principles individuated from the United Kingdom, to complete the frame, it should be added those identified by the Major NATO Commanders, applicable solely at sea. These four principles - seizing the initiative, containment, defence in depth and presence – are really important because of their impact on the United Kingdom's maritime perspectives. This is proved by the importance given in British doctrine to their membership in multinational alliances.

Maritime Operations

Maritime forces could be employed in different ways, they are conventionally inserted into three categories: military, constabulary and benign operations. In Fundamentals of British Maritime Doctrine, primacy is given to military uses which 'Dominate the higher end'[266] while constabulary and benign activities could need a supportive role of military operations to be protected and being carried on properly. Military actions involve combat, employed or threatened. Classical examples here are all the warfighting tasks in which it is requested the use of force, joined from other less common instances, as naval diplomacy in which forces are used to coerce or signal a message to another country. In this context, therefore, on the base, there are the combat capabilities of a nation because the force is not always committed.

Constabulary use or policing use, as we have seen in the other chapters of this thesis, forces are employed to enforce both national and international law. In these tasks, violence is the last resort, used only for self-defence, due to this 'Combat is not, therefore, the means by which the mission is achieved'[267]. Benign tasks, instead, are those such as search and rescue or disaster relief, in which military forces are used only in support of specialized formations with specific capabilities and knowledge. In these tasks, violence has no part. However, there is the possibility that these categories

---

[265] *Ivi* p. 189.
[266] *Ivi* p. 34.
[267] *Ibid.*

and tasks are used simultaneously or consequently. In recent years, many operations started as a constabulary operation, increased in the necessity to use violence and so also demanding for the launch of military operations. This should not suggest that these categories are arbitrary or a matter of degree. In fact, there is a difference related to the legal base which differs for each of them as well as different doctrines and attitudes of mind. It is a really complex scenario and the operation of the United Nations in the former Republic of Yugoslavia, the example that has been provided by the book itself, demonstrates this feature.

Now I am going to analyze specifically every category and the tasks detected inside of them by Fundamentals of British Maritime Doctrine, starting with military ones.

Deterrence is one of the most important tasks of a navy. In particular, British Maritime Doctrine highlights many times the fundamentality of his strategic nuclear deterrent, considered as 'The First military task of the Royal Navy'[268]. These instruments are deployed at sea in order to exploit the stealth nature of nuclear submarines, which are difficult to find and, as a consequence, destroy. Thus, it is stressed the fact that they are not accountable for preemptive attacks or counterattacks. Even though they are highly survivable, in particular when prosecuting patrolling actions, they need the support of surface forces during their deployment. Nuclear submarines provide Britain with the possibility to establish a limited and more flexible strategic nuclear response, that are the elements which describe better his posture in the field. The importance of nuclear deterrence is a matter of fact, evaluated from historical experience. After the Second World War, in fact, with the proliferation of nuclear weapons, of which few countries are provided with, there are no cases of attacks against a nuclear nation, except in two peculiar instances. In the specific could be mentioned firstly, the attack suffered from the United Kingdom, in 1982 at the Falkland Islands which was, however, limited from the fact that it was a subsidiary territory and the aggression was subordinated from the idea that there could be no reaction. Secondly, the attack suffered in 1973 from Israel in the Yom Kippur war, however, owed to the ambiguous position that the country maintains on its nuclear equipment. In conclusion, nuclear deterrence proved more successful, as well as surprisingly more cost-effective, than the "traditional" deterrence conditioned from the calculation of the number of forces detained from the opponent.

Many relevant thinkers of maritime strategy, as we have seen, promoted the importance of the command of the sea as the use for one own's purposes, denying it to the enemy. The complete command of the sea is impossible to be reached without the complete destruction of the enemy after a decisive battle that is, however, a condition difficult to achieve. For this reason, from Corbett on, there was an evolution of the strategic thought with a consideration of a more limited concept, that is

---

[268] *Ivi* p. 83.

instead the control of the sea. This last concept means superiority for naval power and is described from British maritime doctrine as 'A condition in which one has freedom of action to use the sea for one's own purposes in specified areas and for specified periods of time and, where necessary, to deny its use to the enemy'[269]. The reach of this condition has an impact on the context and could be used for other maritime operations, such as, among others, the projection of the power ashore, or to ensure the principle of freedom of navigation through deterrence by means of presence. As a consequence, the concrete importance of the control of the sea is to be used as a means to pursue other ends. Sea control is, surely, one of the major components of any maritime expedition or operation. However, it does not guarantee the complete prevention of being attacked, as it is not an absolute concept as the command of the sea. The Control, limited in time and place, means the consideration of acceptable risks.

Sea control involves all the dimensions that are inside the sea environment: surface, sub-surface and air. In this context the control of the airspace is also relevant, it could be considered as a precondition for this purpose. At least a favourable air situation is needed to prosecute a successful operation. Moreover, the concept of battlespace dominance is related to this last in a broader concept that means joint control of all environments, considering also land, space environments and the electromagnetic spectrum.

Sea denial is not a distinct concept from the control, in fact, the rejection of any action of the enemy is a possible aspect inside of it. To be specific, it consists of the prohibition to an enemy of the ability to control that specific maritime area, without wishing or being capable of control of that area himself. The most common example is the use of this strategy from a country with weaker naval forces. This strategic concept is concretized with, for instance, the *guerre de course* employed to attack supply lines by preventing the enemy to reinforce or by mining his morale. Another important strategy in this sense is the fleet-in-being in which the weaker navy avoids a face-to-face attack against stronger enemy forces whilst continuing to threaten them, in some ways, complicating his choice of options. A successful fleet-in-being strategy could prevent the enemy from reaching the adequate rate of control of the sea, thus preventing him from pursuing other maritime operations. A strategy implemented from stronger navies to counteract the fleet-in-being is, as we have seen, the blockade. One of the operations that could be carried on after proper control of the sea is the projection of the power ashore. It is described as 'The application of maritime power from the sea to influence events on land directly'[270] and it could be reached through different forms of actions such as amphibious operations, organic aircraft, land-attack weapons or special forces. In addition, it could be helpful in

---

[269] *Ivi* p.66.
[270] *Ivi* p. 70.

the context of naval diplomacy as a means to coerce or reassuring, depending on the target of the action. It is a multi-tasking operation that could be used, for example, for interventions or evacuations, as well as for humanitarian and peace support operations.

The projection ashore operations are useful to access problematic territories which are difficult to approach by land or by air or to apply manoeuvre from the sea. The latter is a concept, derivative from land warfare concepts itself, of particular importance because of his double meanings: from one side it describes a style of warfare whilst, on the other hand, it could be framed as one of the ground combat functions. The goal of this kind of manoeuvre in warfare is 'incapacitating an enemy: disrupting his fighting system by concentrating superior force against that element of his fighting system most likely to cause incapacitation'[271]. Even though it could be very risky if it fails, there could be lots of advantages in success, considering a balance of cost-opportunity of the factors. In the maritime context, leveraging on mobility, flexibility and responsive command and control systems, typical of naval warfare, could inspire the attitude of mind to succeed in battles, without so many costs. Manoeuvre as a combat function is substantiated, for example, from the amphibious operations, one of the typical instances of projection of power ashore. In this context, a surprise attack would defeat the enemy without the possibility to react or expose some of his vulnerabilities, which could be exploited in future missions. For this reason, the manoeuvre could be used to create favourable combat conditions, a task associated with the one of the projections of power ashore.

Projection operations could be divided into proactive and reactive. Proactive operations have the aim to seize the initiative of the enemy by moving forces to instigate contact with the enemy. They are not necessarily offensive, in fact, for instance, also withdrawal and evacuations enter in this category. Here should be paid a lot of attention to the difference between offensive and initiative. On the contrary, reactive operations are realized with defensive systems like using protective units or sensors or patrolling the area. These defensive systems are used to reach the control of the sea. Generally, however, because of the complexity of the maritime context, the aims are reached through a combination of proactive and reactive missions.

Combat operations against land involve operations like advance force operations to prepare amphibious objective areas for instance through mine countermeasures or bombardment of the area, amphibious operations, naval support to land operations with combat support and protection, and land-attack in support of sea control as the destruction of enemy's harbours, ports or airbases. In the specific, amphibious operations could take the form of assaults, raids, demonstrations, feint[272] or

---

[271] *Ivi* p. 73.
[272] Which are useful to deceive the enemy creating confusion or taking a coercive role insight of a wider action of naval diplomacy.

withdrawals[273]. Generally, they are characterized by the joint use of forces, and for this reason, is relevant to the ability to coordinate and properly define the command structure. Operations in support of land operations became really important, especially after the equipment of ships with the surface to surface missiles, which are used to attack important positions of the enemy ashore. Even if, however, this role has a dual face being both offensive and defensive at the same time. Moreover, today's navies and the Royal Navy could be taken as an example, are provided with specific categories of ships, such as frigates or destroyers, with the role to counteract attacks coming from all the dimensions concerned by naval warfare: surface, sub-surface and air. The relevance of this role was shown also in recent campaigns like in Afghanistan or in Libya.

Naval diplomacy, as we mentioned, is an important role for navies on which strategic thought has focused only in recent years. It is an action that has the aim to influence the leadership of a state or a group of states in peace conditions. Naval diplomacy has a double nature. From one side, it could be used to support, giving an important contribution in coalition building. On the other side, however, it could be used to deter or coerce opponents. Thanks to the principle of freedom of navigation, ships could be deployed quickly in crisis areas, giving anyway a versatile response even with minimal diplomatic preparation. Their feature, exploited in this task, is the possibility to poise at sea, near the involved areas, and stay there for a prolonged amount of time. They can maintain their presence without occupation, or they can coerce the enemy without using violence. Another important element to bear in mind is the fact that naval forces could be withdrawn at every moment, without embarrassing the country. This is an important feature that distinguishes navies from other forces. British maritime doctrine categorizes naval diplomacy in presence, symbolic use, coercion and prevention. Presence is a general and broad category of naval diplomacy. Here it is prosecuted through port visits, deployment or exercising, so there is no use of force and warships are used as ambassadors to give a positive impression to local situations. The presence of naval vessels in an area could be seen as a symbol of national commitment. It must be remembered that presence is so important that NATO adopted it as one of its principles and inspires its use of maritime forces. The symbolic utilization differentiates from coercion because it gives a message to another country without posing any threat. It could be also characterized by significant assistance to a friend. Alternatively, coercion is used to give a stronger message, for example with the use of force to help an ally. Remarkable employment of navies with the aim to influence events could be also in the prevention of crisis through preventive deployment.

---

[273] Withdrawal could be a relevant part of the mission to secure lives of the personnel involved, and for this reason, a great attention has to be given to the planning of this part of the operations. Navies are useful in sense of secure evacuations, at the end of the mission, but also to protect land forces in critical cases of attacks from the enemy.

After the Second World War, the importance of peace operations faced an enormous growth in their consideration inside the strategic view of the navies. They were pursued under the authority of the United Nations, but often NATO or other regional organizations are involved. Here attention could be paid on the different types of mission that could involve the use of force or not. Only missions of peace enforcement fall in the category of military operations, otherwise, peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations are respectively constabularies and benign, even though these could cross each other or evolve taking another form. Peace enforcement missions have the aim to restore peace between two factions through the use of violence and coercive acts, differentiating from peacekeeping missions in which, instead, the use of force is limited to self-defence and from really strict rules of engagement. In peace enforcement mission, navies could be employed for air protection and enforcement of No-Fly Zones, to provide mine clearance, for evacuations or withdrawals, to give an afloat logistic base, to impose sanctions, an embargo or a blockade, or to provide amphibious support to ground actions. In recent years, the United Kingdom has distinguished in diverse peace operations worldwide. A recent case, reported in Fundamentals of British Maritime Doctrine, is the contribution given in the mission United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former of Yugoslavia. The Royal Navy contributed with fighter aircraft patrol, to enforce the No-Fly Zone, with air support to the troops ashore, with combat service support and with embargo operations. On two occasions the vessels of the Royal Navy were used as neutral territory for meetings and negotiations between factions[274].

With the increasing importance of trade in the globalized world, more emphasis was given to the protection of supply lines and of merchant ships. The protection of commerce could be pursued through naval control of shipping that is organized from the government whenever there is a possible threat to his relevant economic interest. Concretely, warships are sent in the area to assist merchant fleets through navigational warnings or advisories or escorting[275] ships up to the formation of convoys. The last is employed when there are serious risks for maritime trade related to the problem of sea control. Convoys could be exercised in a limited way to ensure their protection. The successful feature of this measure is the fact that it complicates an attacker's task. Nevertheless, convoys are disruptive to trade and, consequently, a weighing of the balance of cost opportunities is necessary. Convoy is an old measure for navies. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a debate was raised over the utility of the measure. With the advent of steamships, the measure was considered useless as well as counterproductive. During the First World War, hence, it was not used, and British merchant

---

[274] Command of Defence Council (1995). p.91.
[275] Distant and close escorting measures are taken in problematic regions of the world in which there are serious menaces to the economic interests of the country. Issues could be caused for example from piracy activities. This happened for instance in Somalia in which we have seen different navies, including the Royal Navy, escorting their merchant ships to provide them with protection.

vessels suffered lots of losses from German U-Boat. To the same extent, the same measures when adopted caused lots of casualties. This was achieved thanks to the use of convoys that reduced losses and damages to trade, proving his efficacy.

Constabulary operations involve, for example, the enforcement of embargoes or other economic sanctions, generally under international mandate as the United Nations' mandate – under art. 41 of the UN Charter. They are employed to enforce legality. Embargoes and economic sanctions are measures short of war and consequently, force should be used only in self-defence or against eventual violations. Limited use of force distinguishes this type of measure from military acts, especially blockades, which have completely different legal bases referable to the international right of war. Recent examples of embargoes are the arms embargo in Libya launched from resolutions of the UN Security Council in 2011 and extended, for the moment, to 2020. In 2014, after the Crimean crisis, the EU launched arms sanctions and dual-use items sanctions against Russia, together with other economic sanctions imposed from many states of the international community like limited trade with Sebastopol and Crimean areas. Other policing operations are counter-piracy operations and other missions in assistance to civil power as the protection of ports and national interests from eventual terrorists' acts or proliferation of WMD. Peacekeeping missions too, fall inside the constabulary category. This means the use of interposition forces with restricted rules of engagement. Peacekeeping forces are accepted from both warring parties and, impartially, support the efforts to maintain security. Maritime forces could be used, in this sense, to supervise a marine demarcation line, monitor the respect of a boundary line and patrol a cushioned area at sea. Landing forces could be employed as ground peacekeeping forces.

Among the benign applications of maritime power is the role in humanitarian and disaster relief missions, in which the United Kingdom has been historically involved in critical contexts worldwide. These operations exploit the extreme flexibility and logistic capacity of navies to support countries after, for instance, hurricanes and tropical cyclones. The last in particular happens very frequently in the Caribbean where some of the United Kingdom's Dependent Territories like Bermuda, the Cayman Islands or the British Virgin Islands are placed. As a consequence, operations of humanitarian and disaster relief are inserted in the Defence Role 1. The case presented in the book is one of Bangladesh in 1991. In this event, the Asian country was hit by a hurricane. The Royal Navy took action with its own helicopters, ships and ground staff in order to assist in the delivery of much-needed food and stores[276]. The United Kingdom provides, in an area around his coasts, search and rescue interventions, in order to honour the international law of the sea[277]. Other tasks could be training and exercising

---

[276] Command of Defence Council (1995). p. 103.
[277] It is formed mostly from four international treaties: the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea(SOLAS) of 1914 but modified, the last time, in 1974, the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue

with foreign or Commonwealth countries. The United Kingdom's training scheme is recognized as one of the best in the world and for this reason, many other nations take inspiration from it to train their forces, otherwise, they participate in joint training sessions which are 'Of mutual importance by increasing interoperability'[278]. Naval forces are often involved in peacebuilding operations[279] helping with the clearance of mines in the beaches or with logistical assistance.

Means of the Royal Navy

The United Kingdom has all the interest to be equipped with a distinctive range of capabilities, as they call them 'A balanced fleet'[280]. At the national level, it has happened that the country was obliged to act alone, as in the case of the Falkland War of 1982, therefore there is the need to have a force composed of ships, aircraft and ground troops capable of carrying on different tasks in each possible context or area. Moreover, the United Kingdom 'As a leading European maritime nation, would be able to make a significant contribution to the allocation of forces to such an operation'[281]. As a consequence, they participate in lots of missions relating to the alliances as well as in training sessions with other states to build more coordination of forces. Even though the United States always made majoritarian efforts to joint operations, the United Kingdom tried to provide an important contribution in this field. Therefore, as participating in these missions is different from the mere national effort, it stressed the necessity of a balanced fleet which could be used to fill all the gaps needed to cooperate and to achieve a defined aim.

In addition, it is important the element of readiness on which British maritime doctrine pays a lot of attention. In this sense, due to the fact that navies operate in a vast and complex environment, they should be prepared for all eventualities. Therefore, a particular focus has to be given in the first instance to preparation and training of forces and, secondly, to the systems equipped and types of ships which could be employed. As the training of forces and the building of ships, despite their durability, are not quickly reachable it is important for Commanders, both national and inside NATO's framework, to invest time in the proper organization of the forces employable. To illustrate,

---

(SAR) of 1979 signed in Hamburg, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982 and the International Convention on Salvage signed in London in 1989. These four treaties impose the duty to save people in dangerous situations at sea.

[278] Command of Defence Council (1995). p.104.

[279] It is a long-term and complex process to create the conditions for sustainable taking of peace measures to address core issues that affect the functioning of the society and State. The aim is to avoid lapsing into a conflict strengthening national capacities in conflict management in order to lay the foundation for a wave of sustainable peace and development, giving the state all the capacities to successfully carry out its key functions. (more details from United Nations Peacekeeping website).

[280] Command of Defence Council (1995). p.162.

[281] *Ivi* p.161.

from the twenty-first century it became a case that the Royal Navy Command was not able to replenish the position left from different types of ships, which ended their lifetime, with renewed forces. It is the case, for example, of the aircraft carriers of the Invincible class[282], retired in 2014, and not immediately substituted from the two Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers one of which, HMS Queen Elizabeth, became operational at the beginning of 2020, while the second, HMS Prince of Wales, was only given to the Royal Navy, to start sea trials, in 2019 and will be fully ready for front-line duties around the globe from 2023.

The nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBN) are central ships in the maritime strategic thought of the United Kingdom and implied at NATO level, too. The four Vanguard-class submarines, equipped with Trident II D5 nuclear missiles, actually deployed have the role to provide strategic and sub-strategic nuclear deterrence to the country. In addition, the British government ordered the building of the renewed SSBN, Dreadnought class, to replace actual ships in active service. Nuclear powered attack submarines (SSN), instead, are used in different operations. They are deployed principally as sea denial systems exploiting their excellent anti-submarine and anti-ship capabilities – torpedoes and anti-surface missiles. Moreover, they could be utilized in multiple tasks such as collect information, the base for special forces, protect strategic nuclear deterrent and, if equipped with land-attack missiles, they could be employed in power projection operations or for naval diplomacy. Thanks to their high transit speeds and versatility they are, frequently, the first to arrive at target areas and they could be used alone or in support of land forces. An SSN, the HMS Conqueror of the Churchill class, was the first ship to arrive in the area of the Falklands, a few days from the Argentine invasion. It is famously known because of the sinking of an Argentine cruiser, ARA *General Belgrano*, through three torpedoes. The episode was fundamental for the entire war because Argentine ships, including the *Veinticinco de Mayo* aircraft carrier, were no more involved in the conflict[283]. The Royal Navy today can number three – of seven - Astute-class SSNs and three Trafalgar class SSNs.

The aircraft carriers are the central means in the strategic view of the United States, seen as the embodiment of their naval supremacy. In my opinion, this conception is not completely shared from the United Kingdom's one, as from the British Maritime doctrine transpires a prevalent role of the systems of nuclear deterrence that we have just seen. Despite this, the United Kingdom gives great importance to his aircraft carriers as they could be employed in diversified roles that come from sea

---

[282] It is a class of light aircraft carriers operated from the Royal Navy. HMS Invincible, HMS Illustrious, HMS Ark Royal were in active service in different campaigns such as Falklands War and 2003 Invasion of Iraq. Their service life lasted from 1980 to 2014 when the three ships were decommissioned and then broken up (the last, HMS Illustrious, in 2017). From 2014 until 2017, when Queen Elizabeth class was commissioned, the Royal Navy found itself without aircraft carriers.
[283] Command of Defence Council (1995). p.193.

control to power projection operations, until the command and control of maritime operation as a naval base. The United Kingdom, nowadays, operates with one new HMS Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier, of the Queen Elizabeth class, while another ship of the same class, the HMS Prince of Wales, was given in 2019 to the navy to start sea training and will be operative - it is expected - from 2023. The new class replaced the older Invincible aircraft carrier-class, retired in 2014. Both ships have a total displacement of approximately 65,000 tons and are configured for Short Take-off and Vertical Landing (STOVL). They deploy fixed-wing aircraft of the fifth-generation Lockheed Martin F-35B[284] Lightning II and reconnaissance, close air support aircraft, anti-submarine and Airborne Early Warning (AEW) helicopters AgustaWestland AW101 *Merlin* MK 2 and MK3 - the last one, however, will be substituted from Merlin MK4/4A generation helicopters[285] - and AgustaWestland *Wildcat* HMA Mk2 helicopters, which are employed also in frigates and destroyers. The composition of the air group is based on the mission and would be used on independent operations and in whichever mission that has no possibility to project naval power ashore by the sea and if, of course, there are clear flying conditions. At the operational level, the aircraft carriers could be used as headquarters or joint command of the mission.

Really important are the Landing Platform Docks (LPD) and Landing Platform Helicopters (LPH) of the specialist amphibious ships. In a potentially hostile context, they can transport and offload lead elements of the landing force and their equipment without the need for harbours or airfields[286]. They are the base for assault and support helicopters. LPD has all the necessary command and control facilities and is capable of landing heavy battle inning equipment, such as theFV4034 Challenger 2 heavy tanks, or Commando vehicles and equipment. Generally, LPD is deployed together with Auxiliary ships – as well as Ships Taken Up From Trade (STUFT) on occasion – to provide logistic support to the troops and to transport an increased number of helicopters. Moreover, in a few occasions, aircraft carriers could be used as Landing Platform Docks or Landing Platform Helicopter, for short amphibious missions or fast dashes. The Royal Navy is equipped with two Albion Class Landing Platform Docks ships, HMS Albion and HMS Bulwark, which have a full displacement of approximately 19,560 tons and are able to carry their crew of 325 members and up to 405 troops with their vehicles and combat supplies. They could comprise landing craft, Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCACs) and Mexeflotes like the Landing Craft Utility (LCU) Mk10 which can carry up to 120 Royal Marines or one tank or, again, four LCVP Mk5 landing craft vehicles. Furthermore, Albion Landing class ships are equipped also with Mark 3 RRC rigid raiding craft or fast and versatile ships to shore.

---

[284] Which differentiates from F-35A and F-35C because they are Short Take-off and Vertical Landing (STOVL) aircraft.
[285] They were already delivered in 2018 in the Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton.
[286] Command of Defence Council (1995). p.174.

For what concerns amphibious vehicles, the Royal Navy is equipped with Armored All-Terrain Vehicles BvS 10 *Viking,* employed from the end of summer 2006 in Afghanistan thanks to their particular features which permit them to operate in all parts of the world in whichever climate condition.

The operative means of the Royal Navy are also destroyers and frigates which are multi-purpose combatants with an emphasis on anti-air or anti-submarine warfare, but that could be used in many other fields[287]. Although they are the smaller units, they are deployed often in independent missions. Their capabilities, moreover, permit them to cover a wide range of military, constabulary and benign tasks. They are also indispensable in task groups as defensive systems and contribute to reinforce the number of helicopters on the battlefield. In particular are deployed six Daring class Type 45 Destroyers, designed for anti-aircraft and anti-missile warfare, thirteen Duke class Type 23 Frigates, designed for submarine warfare and eight City class Type 26 Frigates, always for antisubmarine warfare and assigned to the new Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers as a means for protection.

It must be considered also the Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) with an important role in area anti-submarine and anti-aircraft, surveillance and reconnaissance operations and employment off United Kingdom's coasts and Dependent Territories waters to protect offshore interests like fisheries or anti-terrorism mission. Moreover, there are Mine Countermeasures Vessels (MCMV), to maintain the flow of shipping and the access to the open ocean or, in power projection, they are important in precursor operation as well as post-conflict mine clearance. For these purposes, are used, for instance, six Hunt class and seven Sandown class minehunters, two Scimitar class fast patrol boats and four offshore patrol vessels of the River class.

The role of auxiliary ships is often underestimated because they are not directly involved in combat functions. This role, actually, is fundamental for every mission and, at the level of mission's command and control, is paid a lot of attention to the planning of the logistic forces. They are, in fact, a key element of every mission carried on in long distances as it was for the conflict in the Falklands as well as for Afghanistan or Iraq, where they played a central position. Ships of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary as the two Wave class tankers or the Fort II class replenishment ship or, again, RFA Argus (A135) Primary Casualty Receiving Ship, are helpful for a plurality of roles as providing fuel, store, maintenance, or transport of troops and vehicles. In their role, in many cases, they could be integrated from Ships Taken Up From Trade (STUFT) as containerships, transport ships, tankers or hospital ships.

Furthermore, should not be forgotten the role of thousands of people and professionals which have made, and make, the history of this force. It could appear strange to link means to personnel, but it is

---

[287] *Ivi* p.175.

an 'Association that typifies combat at and from the sea'[288]. In specific, technological equipment must function in harmony, together with highly trained and motivated personnel, during the battle if maritime power is to be applied effectively[289].

The United Kingdom has a long history of professional armed forces, famous and respected worldwide for their 'Excellence in leadership, training and motivation'[290]. A large number of sailors, marines, soldiers and civilians which live together for long periods of time and, often, in uncomfortable conditions. In this sense, it is important a high level of training which, for the Royal Navy's personnel, is recognized as excellent all over the world, and for this reason, many allied states take inspiration or participate in training sessions. Training builds cohesion, proficiency and teamwork, all fundamental characteristics to carry on a successful operation avoiding for example confusion, developing a higher tolerance of stress during fights, too.

Coordination is a key feature of this force; it would be reached through training that could enhance teamwork. Other important elements are leadership that, at all the levels, could contribute to the effectiveness and fluent functioning of the ships, combined with the discipline that rests within the individual. Another important element is morale. It was, in fact, identified as one of the principles of war. It is 'Based on the recognition of the needs of the individuals who collectively form the team and manifest itself in the will to win'[291]. This is influenced from different elements such as training, understanding of the aim, discipline and self-respect, mutual trust and respect of those in and under command as well as the support of the public opinion at home. Operational success is the best way to boost morale, even when there is a lack of all other factors. Vessels, aircraft and individuals are partners in this job, their capabilities must be connected to bring success.

Why is the Royal Navy so important for the United Kingdom?

Maritime power is described from Fundamentals of British Maritime Doctrine as 'Military, political and economic power exerted through an ability to use the sea'[292]. It is traditionally employed in defence of sea lines of communication, the source of economic wellness of a country as well as a livelihood for those countries that are dependent. Moreover, it has an important role in influencing the events inland thanks to amphibious attacks. The power projection activities of navies got a development due to the advent of modern amphibious techniques, together with the possibilities to use ships, especially aircraft carriers, as a sea base or the possibility to exploit missiles to attack

[288] *Ivi* p.181.
[289] *Ibid.*
[290] *Ivi* p.178.
[291] *Ivi* p. 179.
[292] *Ivi* p. 54.

sensible points inside a country. Therefore, although the joint use of land, air and sea components, 'The unifying factor is the use of the sea'[293].

From a military point of view, then, appeared pacific from diverse historical researches the importance of the minimum control of the sea to win the operations, both for continental states and for maritime one. To be specific it was shown as continental states, to win a war, had to control the sea, deny it to their enemy or, at least, contend it vigorously. On the other side, for sea powers or for maritime-dependent coalitions, the command of the sea appeared as an indispensable condition to win a war[294]. The utility of the sea was shown from joint forces which exploited it to launch power projection operations ashore. Even without an offensive role of maritime power involved in the operation, it was shown the importance of the command of the sea because land operations were lost without the safeguard of supply lines in support of their action.

The management of risks is a relevant point at the moment that precedes and during maritime operations. Warships, in fact, could freely navigate the seas without a diplomatic agreement, as well as combats at sea do not violate the territorial integrity and do not cause as much collateral damage as land warfare does. Maritime operations could be expected to be conducted in conditions of greater political risk compared with them. Furthermore, a warship is, both from a political and military point of view, significant for ground and air formation, hence his eventual sinking, even if they are highly resilient, would constitute a more significant loss than that of a single tank or aircraft[295].

The importance of sea power could be underlined from a careful investigation of their attributes. This latter differentiates, frequently, maritime power from the others. Maritime forces bring these operational attributes: mobility, versatility, sustained reach, resilience, lift capacity, poise, leverage, joint attributes and combined attributes.

Mobility means that ships could reach long distances all over the world, passing through the sea which covers 70% of the world's surface. Thanks to their versatility warships could change their military posture in an easier way, perform several tasks together and be rapidly available. They could be employed in military and political tasks from the control of the sea to defence of commerce, from power projection ashore to naval diplomacy. The last is an important task that could be brought from navies in many different ways on the basis of the level of the crisis. Warships could bring a flexible response that could change quickly from peacetime contexts to conflictual ones. Some types of ships are adaptable to diverse roles, an example could be the Frigates ships, this is one of the reasons that brought countries to invest more and more on this type of ships which could be useful in many contexts. An important element of Frigates is their use in multidimensional tasks. They have the

---

[293] *Ibid.*
[294] *Ivi* pp. 54-55.
[295] *Ivi* pp. 56-57.

capability to be employed defensively in three of the dimensions of sea warfare: surface, sub-surface and air. Whilst from an offensive point of view they have capabilities in two of them. Warships could be employed either individually or inside groups or task forces. Therefore, each of them can exploit their individual characteristics for a combined, defensive or offensive, response. This element should not be underestimated. Warships, hence, are mostly used in combined operations than in individual ones.

Sustained reach is explained as 'The ability to operate for extended periods at a considerable distance from shore support'[296]. This skill remarks and is remarked from the presence of the logistic support. It shows all the importance given to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary for individual operations as well as for joint ones. The logistic support enables warships with more reach, thanks to tankers, supply and repair vessels, upheld by medical facilities and replacement forces if the mission must be sustained for long periods far from home waters. It must be said that one of the attributes is the resilience of the ships. They are, in fact, built to resist substantial damages before they become non-operational and are designed to operate in areas contaminated from use of WMD without reducing their combat capabilities. The loss of a warship, however, has an important impact on morale and on the general performance in battle, and so commanders must bear this in mind.

Sealift capacity of ships allows them to amphibious forces to transit and poise, and then to project the power ashore, moreover, it could be the only employable way to transport, in particular for long distances, and deploy a high number of land and air forces with their equipment and logistic support. As the United Kingdom consists of islands, they are obliged in every mission to calculate some maritime support to deploy, resupply or withdraw their forces. In this sense, there is a broad use of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary as well as merchant ships.

In the combat area, maritime forces can poise for long periods, acting 'As a force for deterrence or active coercion'[297]. Poise exploits other attributes of maritime power such as mobility, versatility, sustained reach and lift capacity. It is an attribute used a lot for naval diplomacy because it causes far less political damages than the disposition of landing. Another primary element, that I have already mentioned, is the fact that 'Maritime forces can be withdrawn without the stigma of retreat'[298], that is a peculiarity of this force and distinguishes it from the others. Through their suitable positioning, the maritime force can provide their leverage's attribute, hence, they have a particular impact on what is happening on land. Leverage is a dual concept, employable both in a political and in a military context. Politically it can coerce the behaviour of another government, so it can be used for naval diplomacy. From a military point of view instead, naval forces can influence what is taking place on

---

[296] *Ivi* pp. 58-59.
[297] *Ivi* p. 60.
[298] *Ibid.*

the battlefield, providing manoeuvre from the sea to distract the opponent's land forces or to disrupt them.

Navies have many times proved their joint and combined attributes, fighting on the side of other forces as well as other countries. It is derived from the fact that 'Maritime operations are joint by definition'[299], to be specific, they involve the use of forces that operate on land, sea and air. This contribution could be made in every moment of the fight from the previous phase, to the combat with the amphibious operation or as a headquarter of the command and control of the mission, finally, at the end of the campaign helping the secure withdrawal of the forces. Their capabilities facilitated either in missions in which the United Kingdom was alone, as well as, in missions inside international alliances, for instance, the one under NATO. The Royal Navy always proved his attributes, in particular missions involving its capability to coordinate with other countries. As we have seen, British maritime doctrine gives great importance to the role inside alliances and joint missions.

Some important factors could be added as the cost-effectiveness of warships compared with other units of other forces. Warships are expensive to build and train. Nevertheless, they are not only a mere weapon, but they can also be a base for the command and provide a versatile package of capabilities that other forces could not. Moreover, despite their long times to be built, warships have a very long-life cycle and are easier to update with new systems. As a consequence, they conform perfectly to a moment of rapid technological progress.

Therefore, answering the main question, the Royal Navy is important for the United Kingdom firstly for its attributes that permit their use in many diversified contexts and serve in numerous tasks, perfectly adapting to changing situations. Secondly, the United Kingdom is an island and, due to this, needs an own strong maritime force to protect their interests, to participate in international missions and, in particular, to have a role inside a globalized and interconnected world excelling amongst other countries of the international community. Finally, even if this is not a secondary reason, to protect his interests especially the economic ones. In today's globalized world in which commerce is the key of state's wealthiness, and the 90% of it passes through the sea, that for the United Kingdom means that 95% of trade passes through sea lines of communication, in addition, the fleet set growth of the 7,8% in 2018[300], together with the importance of the internet - the majority of internet global traffic is dependent upon submarine cables - it is fundamental to maintain a strong maritime force as the Royal Navy. This challenge is evident for the United Kingdom's Government too, and, despite the many problems, it is working really hard to maintain its Navy at the highest level in the world, in particular after Brexit.

---

[299] *Ivi* p. 61.
[300] For a deeper look at this information visit the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) statistics and the International Chamber of Shipping websites.

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of my work I asked myself this question: what is the role of the navies in today's global context?

In a globalized world in which all countries are widely connected, navies have a central role considering in particular the economic relations between them. As I have shown, today commerce is central for nations' wealthiness and it is mostly connected by the sea. It is estimated that 90% of commerce passes through the sea and for many states, like the United Kingdom, is even more incisive. For this reason, control of maritime communications has become fundamental. Navies assumed the role of protecting global trade as well as specific national interests. The United States, for instance, has substantiated their power thanks to their maritime forces and naval bases spread across the world, that permitted them to influence events in areas which are far away from homeland.

Moreover, with the Digital Revolution and the increasing importance of the internet in our societies, navies have been used to protect the submarine communication cables, which are laid on seabed to carry telecommunications signals across seas and oceans. Thus, it is a really sensible point nowadays since the majority of digital data and internet pass through these submarine communication cables.

Moreover, from a military point of view, the role of navies is explicated through both the traditional functions of control of the sea and power projection ashore. In addition to these functions, specific systems have been introduced as deterrents, for states like the United Kingdom that can benefit from nuclear weapons. Other tools are aircraft carriers employed as naval bases during prolonged operations in remote areas of the world.

Through the years, as substantiated by Corbett and many others, navies' position has been strengthened in joint operations with other forces, with the addition of air and space forces, as well as in coordinated operation with other states, especially for those which belong to international alliances like NATO. This is a key point to bear in mind and where navies are evolving the most.

In the future, the potential position that could be played by cyber forces should not be underestimated; together with growing utilization of space-based resources in a more animated fight for the control of this undiscovered dimension.

In conclusion, despite the increasing attention paid by the international community and by High Commands of every single nation in the employment of nuclear forces, navies succeeded in carving themselves a relatively decisive position inside the strategic doctrine of all countries. This was a consequence both of the necessity to protect sea lines of communications, created from their growing centrality, and from their unique attributes that allowed them to distinguish from other forces. Therefore, this is the reason why they are particularly relevant today and why countries continue to

invest a lot of money on the construction of bigger ships that can better protect their interests, as well as project their influence worldwide.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Command of Defence Council. (1995). *The Fundamentals of British Maritime Doctrine. BR1806.* London. Her Majesty's Stationary Office (HMSO).

Corbett J. S. (2017). *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. [Original Version 1911]. Scotts Valley. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Crisher B. B. and Souva M. (2014). *Power at Sea: A Naval Power Dataset. 1865–2011. In* International Interactions. 40:4. Published online: 22 Jul 2014. pp. 602-629.

Dodge P. (2005). *China's Naval Strategy and Nuclear Weapons: The Risks of Intentional and Inadvertent Nuclear Escalation. In* Comparative Strategy. 24:5. pp. 415-430. DOI: 10.1080/01495930500448947.

Epkenhans M., Hillmann J. & Nägler F. (2015). *Jutland: World War I's Greatest Naval Battle.* [ebook] The University Press of Kentucky.

Fahron-Hussey C. (2019). *Military Crisis Management Operations by NATO and the EU. The Decision-Making Process.* Wiesbaden. Springer VS.

Gentili A. (1598). *De Jure Bellum libri Tres.*

Gorshkov S.G. (1979). *The Sea Power of the State.* Translated by United States Joint Publication Research Service. (1980).

Gray C. S. (1994). *The Navy in the post-Cold War world. The uses and value of Strategic Sea Power.* Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Hager J. (2014). *A Beginner's Guide to Navy (Armed Forces for Naval Warfare)*. Delhi. The English Press.

Haines S. (2016). *War at sea: Nineteenth-century laws for twenty-first century wars?. In* International review of the red cross. pp. 419-447.

Hauser B. (2010). *The Evolution of strategy.* Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Homan K. and Kamerling S. (2010). *Operational Challenges to Counterpiracy Operations off the coast of Somalia. In* Van Ginkel B. and Van Der Putten, F.-P. T*he International response to Somali piracy: challenges and opportunities.* Leiden. Brill – Nijhoff Publishers.

Internation Institute of Humanitarian Law. (1994). *San Remo Manual on International Law Applicable to Armed Conflicts at Sea.*

Klein N. (2011). *Maritime security and the law of the sea.* Oxford. Oxford University Press.

Kraska J. (2011). *Maritime Power and the Law of the Sea: Expeditionary Operations in World Politics.* Oxford. Oxford University Press.

Kraska J. And Pedrozo R. (2013). *International Maritime Security Law.* Leiden. Martinus Nijhoff Pubblishers. pp. 70-73.

Mahan A.T. (2012). *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783.* [Original Version 1890]. [ebook] Dover Publications.

Miller S. E. And Van Evera S. (2014). *Naval strategy and National Security.* Princeton. Princeton University Press.

Morgan-Owen D. (2015). A *Revolution in Naval Affairs? Technology, Strategy and British Naval Policy in the 'Fisher Era'. In* Journal of Strategic Studies. Published on May 11, 2015. pp. 944-965.

Nimitz C.W. (1947). *Report to Secretary of the Navy. December.* Reprinted by Brassery's Naval Annual. Portsmouth. (1948).

Pandolfe F. C. (2016). *The Evolution of modern U.S. naval strategy. In* Naval War College Review. Volume 69; Issue 4; ISSN:00281484. pp. 7-13.

Papastavridis E. (2014) *The Interception of Vessels on the High Seas: Contemporary Challenges to the Legal Order of the Oceans.* London. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Paret P. (edited by). Craig G. A. & Gilbert F. (1986) *Makers of modern strategy*. Princeton. Princeton University Press. [Labanca N. (edited by), Baldini M. (traduced by) & Rossi A. (traduced by) (1992). *Guerra e strategia nell'età contemporanea. In* Forum per i problemi della pace e della guerra. Genova. Marietti editore].

Phifer H. (2014). *Handbook of Naval Warfare and Tactics. Delhi.* World Technologies.

Ronzitti N. (2014). *Diritto Internazionale dei conflitti armati.* Fifth Edition. [First Edition 1998]. Torino. Giappichelli editore.

Speller I. (2016). *Naval Warfare. In* Jordan D., Lonsdale D. J., Kiras J. D., Speller I., Tuck C. & Walton C. D. *Understanding Modern Warfare*, Second Edition. [First Edition 2008] Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Till G. (1982). *Maritime strategy and nuclear age*, London. Macmillan LTD.

Von Clausewitz, C. (2008). *On War.* [Original Edition *Von Kriege* (1832)]. [ebook] Princeton University Press.

Woodward, C.V. (2007). *The Battle for Leyte Gulf: The Incredible Story of World War II's Largest Naval Battle.* [ebook] Skyhorse.

You Ji (July 2016). *China's Emerging Indo-Pacific Naval Strategy. In* Asia Policy. Number 22. pp. 11-19.

LUISS ⛫

Dipartimento
di Scienze Politiche

Cattedra di Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali

Laurea Magistrale in Relazioni Internazionali

NAVAL POWER AFTER THE COLD WAR. THE ROLE OF THE ROYAL NAVY IN TODAY'S GLOBAL CONTEXT

Prof. Federico Niglia
RELATORE

Prof. Domenico Maria Bruni
CORRELATORE

Gianmarco Sechi
matr. 639202
CANDIDATO

Anno Accademico 2019/2020

CONTENTS

Il mio studio è stato principalmente orientato dalla volontà di comprendere l'attuale rilevanza rivestita dalle marine militari.

Nell'immaginario comune la forza militare di una grande potenza è spesso associata al possesso di armi nucleari. Tutto il mondo rimase scioccato dalla potenza di tale sistema d'arma quando, il 6 e 9 di agosto del 1945, gli Stati Uniti scagliarono per la prima volta le bombe atomiche "*Little Boy*" e "*Fat Man*" contro il loro nemico giapponese. L'uomo non aveva mai costruito, almeno fino a quel momento, un mezzo così tanto devastante.

Questo episodio comportò una rivoluzione nel modo di vedere la guerra e il mondo. Questo in particolare sarebbe stato caratterizzato dal bilanciamento delle forze tra le due superpotenze uscite vittoriose dalla guerra: Stati Uniti, per l'appunto, e Unione Sovietica. Quest'ultima, infatti, non poteva restare indietro: gli ingeneri sovietici iniziarono a lavorare a lungo, soprattutto sfruttando i dati offerti dal KGB sugli esperimenti segretissimi tenuti all'interno del progetto Manhattan, per recuperare l'inferiorità rispetto al suo rivale. Nel 1949 i sovietici avevano la loro bomba atomica.

Il periodo della Guerra Fredda, caratterizzato principalmente da un difetto di comunicazione tra le due parti in lotta, porrà al centro della dottrina strategica la continua minaccia della guerra termo-nucleare. Il rischio era quello che ogni singolo incidente potesse comportare uno scontro tale da mettere a serio rischio l'umanità intera.

Gli Alti Comandi militari delle due superpotenze erano quasi interamente concentrati sulla implementazione delle strategie di utilizzo di quest'arma, almeno nel primo periodo, riservando alle forze cosiddette "tradizionali" uno spazio minore. Le strategie, del primo periodo della Guerra Fredda, volte ad un uso offensivo del nucleare erano mirate a spezzare, un po' come era stato per il Giappone, la volontà del nemico di combattere. Infatti, le superpotenze si riservavano la possibilità di colpire il nemico, attraverso un attacco nucleare a sorpresa (il "*First Strike*"), prima che lui facesse uso del suo potenziale bellico.

Con lo sviluppo di armi sempre più forti e distruttive, sorse la necessità di risposte più moderate alla minaccia. Uno scontro termo-nucleare, infatti, avrebbe avuto una portata talmente devastante da mettere in gioco la possibilità stessa di avere dei vantaggi da una eventuale vittoria. Si cominciò dunque a ripiegare su strategie che rivedessero il ruolo delle forze tradizionali da impiegare in una eventuale guerra che avrebbe visto, anche se solo come ultima risorsa, l'uso delle armi nucleari. Queste ultime pertanto assumevano più la forma di strumento di deterrenza, tale da reggere gli equilibri del mondo bipolare. L'affermazione di questa deterrenza "pura", che fa leva su un equilibrio del terrore piuttosto che su un equilibrio di forze, si caratterizzò per la sua straordinaria efficacia nel perseguimento dello scopo.

Durante il periodo della Guerra Fredda si sono combattuti a livello globale diversi conflitti che hanno visto anche un coinvolgimento delle due superpotenze. Queste, non potendo scontrarsi direttamente, hanno fatto sfociare la loro conflittualità in altre regioni del mondo facendo uso di mezzi di guerra convenzionale. Nei diversi episodi, tuttavia, le forze navali non hanno mai avuto un ruolo centrale. Della Guerra Fredda infatti si ricordano soprattutto grandi battaglie terresti e aree, mentre viene menzionato in misura minore il contributo che le potenze navali hanno dato a queste missioni.

Le forze navali sono state rese famose dalle grandi battaglie che hanno coinvolto le imponenti flotte dei paesi in lotta. Le si ricorda, ad esempio, per le battaglie di Azio del 31 a.C. in cui si affermò la figura di Ottaviano con cui si aprì la stagione all'Impero Romano, oppure, per la distruzione nel 1588 della *Invincibile Armada* che avviò il declino della potenza spagnola e l'affermazione dell'Inghilterra come una potenza navale. Le si ricorda, ancora, per la battaglia di Trafalgar dove l'ammiraglio Nelson, eroe della Royal Navy, sconfisse le marine di Francia e Spagna riportando un esito che si dimostrerà decisivo sulle sorti dell'Europa falcidiata dalle guerre napoleoniche della prima metà del XIX secolo. Altro esempio è la battaglia del Golfo di Leyte dell'ottobre 1944 che sancì la fine del controllo del Pacifico da parte dell'Impero giapponese, gettando le basi per la definitiva vittoria statunitense nell'area e la fine del Secondo conflitto mondiale. Sono inoltre famose le grandi operazioni anfibie come l'approdo di Guglielmo "il Conquistatore" sulle coste dell'Inghilterra, presto trasformato nel suo regno nel 1066, oppure per il *D-Day,* lo sbarco in Normandia, che nel 1944 aprì quel secondo fronte in Europa tanto agognato dai sovietici per alleggerire la pressione della avanzata nazista che ebbe un'impatto enorme sull'esito della Seconda Guerra Mondiale.

Tutte queste battaglie hanno fatto la storia delle potenze navali rendendole, in qualche modo, indispensabili per ottenere il successo in qualsiasi campagna militare.

Dalla fine della Seconda Guerra Mondiale episodi di celebri scontri tra le flotte di due paesi sarebbero stati rari da un lato, per l'avanzamento tecnologico in questo comparto militare e dall'altro, per l'attenzione crescente ad altre proprietà che esso possedeva e che poteva apportare all'intero sforzo bellico. Si predilessero, ad esempio, operazioni anfibie oppure lo sfruttamento delle enormi portaerei nella funzione di basi navali, come si vide nei numerosi interventi occorsi durante la Guerra di Corea, soprattutto nella fase che comportò un avanzamento del contingente americano sino a sfiorare i confini cinesi, oppure durante la guerra in Vietnam.

Anche in episodi relativamente recenti, come in Afghanistan o in Iraq, le marine militari hanno giocato il ruolo di forze da sbarco e di basi mobili, oltre che di mezzi di trasporto di truppe e del supporto logistico che con gli anni è divenuto un punto sempre più centrale nelle fasi di progettazione e di conduzione dello sforzo bellico. Allo stesso modo, in Libia nel 2011 lo sforzo delle marine può essere considerato secondario, nonostante il ruolo giocato nel far rispettare la No-Fly Zone imposta

contro le forze di Gheddafi, oppure nei bombardamenti realizzati contro punti militari sensibili del nemico con l'utilizzo di missili *cruiser* lanciati da navi USA e UK.

Un episodio in cui, invece, la marina ha mostrato le sue vere potenzialità è stato durante la Guerra delle Falkland del 1982. Qui la Royal Navy ha impiegato tutta la sua forza navale, compresa parte della sua flotta mercantile, per sostenere una guerra in un territorio molto lontano dalla madrepatria ottenendo, nonostante le numerose difficoltà, una ragguardevole vittoria. La marina si è distinta non solo per il trasporto in tempi relativamente rapidi di tutte le forze in un territorio lontano, o per il ruolo di centro di comando delle operazioni, ma sopratutto per l'influenza esercitata sull'intero conflitto. La campagna infatti era caratterizzata da una inferiorità terrestre e aerea dei britannici, che fu compensata più che degnamente dalla superiorità a livello navale. Un episodio, visto con particolare interesse dalla storiografia, vede coinvolto il sottomarino HMS *Conqueror* che affondò l'incrociatore argentino ARA *General Belgrano.* In seguito a questo evento, l'Argentina si convinse di non utilizzare più le sue navi nel conflitto, compresa la sua portaerei ARA *Veinticinco de Mayo,* comportando una situazione di vantaggio per le forze britanniche che di conseguenza riuscirono in breve tempo a riportare le isole sotto il loro controllo.

Nonostante dal periodo successivo alla Seconda Guerra Mondiale siano cessati gli episodi di grandi battaglie navali che hanno in qualche modo formato quella che è la nostra percezione delle marine e del ruolo che esse giocano nei conflitti armati, i paesi hanno comunque continuato a investire proprie risorse nella costruzione di navi sempre più grandi e costose.

Questo è stato un elemento, insieme ad una forte curiosità personale della materia, che mi ha condotto ad iniziare questo lavoro. Come affermato in precedenza, al centro di tutta la mia attività di analisi e di studio vi è la volontà di comprendere quale sia oggi - nel post-Guerra Fredda - il ruolo assunto dalle marine militari, che importanza rivestono e quali tipi di funzioni svolgono. La ricerca che ho condotto non si è limitata solo alle funzioni prettamente militari svolte da questo corpo; il mio sforzo è stato infatti quello di analizzare la questione da un punto di vista più ampio che coinvolgesse sia le funzioni belliche che i ruoli assunti in tempo di pace.

Per analizzare questo complesso panorama ho strutturato la mia tesi in quattro capitoli. In ciascuno di essi mi sono focalizzato su prospettive differenti cercando di comprendere quanti più aspetti possibili legati a questa materia.

Nel primo capitolo ho incentrato il lavoro sull'analisi dell'evoluzione del pensiero strategico marittimo e delle funzioni che le marine hanno svolto nella storia: i loro obiettivi, i mezzi impiegati per perseguirli, fino ad arrivare all'oggi e alle possibili sfide che alcuni studiosi del calibro di Geoffrey Till o Colin Gray, si sono posti. L'analisi del ruolo delle forze navali parte dalla Grecia Antica, in particolare da Tucidide che racconta alcuni avvenimenti della Guerra del Peloponneso, con l'occhio

di un esperto che la guerra in mare l'ha vissuta, e perfino progettata, in quanto stratega di Atene nella guerra contro Sparta. Nonostante celeberrimi episodi di battaglie navali, in cui lo scontro si sostanziava in attacchi ravvicinati e dunque, nella ricerca di speronamenti e abbordaggi, fu solo dopo la battaglia di Lepanto del 1571 che iniziò a delinearsi un pensiero strategico navale vero e proprio, soprattutto grazie all'avvento delle navi a vela che sostituirono le galee e grazie all'utilizzo dei cannoni che incrementarono la gittata degli scontri. Da qui, si svilupperanno le prime tattiche come le linee da battaglia, oppure il sistema dei convogli per scortare le navi mercantili.

Il pensiero strategico navale raggiunge il suo periodo di massimo splendore soprattutto tra la fine del XIX secolo e le due guerre mondiali, caratterizzandosi per la presenza di autori come Mahan e Corbett che sono tra i principali esponenti di questa materia. Mahan, evidenzia principalmente l'idea del comando di aree marittime intese come obiettivo primario delle marine, mentre Corbett introduce l'utilizzo di operazioni interforze con la collaborazione di tutti i reparti disponibili. Queste strategie furono il sintomo di un'evoluzione in atto e di un mondo che passava dalle navi a vela o a remi, costruite in legno, alle navi in acciaio alimentate a vapore.

Importante per capire la situazione odierna è anche il pensiero navale strategico delle due superpotenze uscite vincitrici dopo la Seconda Guerra Mondiale. Entrambe condividevano il dubbio su quale potesse essere il ruolo da attribuire alle proprie forze convenzionali, in particolare a quelle navali, all'interno di un conflitto che volgeva sempre di più la sua attenzione all'opzione nucleare. Da una parte, gli Stati Uniti, con una forza marittima già affermatasi durante la Seconda Guerra Mondiale, vivono un periodo controverso sotto il punto di vista dell'uniformità di strategie da utilizzare nonché, sul significato da attribuire allo stesso concetto di "strategia" che nel corso del tempo era divenuto sempre più complesso. Dall'altro lato, invece, abbiamo la posizione dell'Unione Sovietica. Quest'ultima ha affidato un ruolo secondario alla marina, intesa come strumento di difesa delle acque nazionali e di mero supporto delle sue potenti forze di terra. Tale visione deriva dalla sconfitta subita nella guerra contro il Giappone nel 1905.

Con la fine della Seconda Guerra Mondiale e l'affermazione dell'Unione Sovietica come superpotenza, considerando i suoi interessi più ampi e un'influenza globalmente estesa da difendere, nasce la necessità di una marina sovietica più potente che fosse in grado di adempiere funzioni essenziali per affrontare il suo avversario imperialista. In questo contesto, specialmente su spinta data dall'Ammiraglio della flotta dell'Unione Sovietica Sergej Gorshkov, la visione viene stravolta dal maggiore rafforzamento in senso offensivo della marina che si concretizza attraverso la costruzione di sottomarini, nucleari e da combattimento, e di navi di superficie, compresa una portaerei. In questo modo la marina sovietica si rafforza per raccogliere e affrontare al meglio le sfide offerte dalla Guerra Fredda, in modo tale da poter difendere efficacemente e proiettare i propri interessi globalmente.

Infine, ho voluto evidenziare la visione odierna della strategia marittima con le possibili sfide da accogliere in futuro. Come era accaduto in seguito alla introduzione delle forze aeree, oggi con lo sviluppo della dimensione spaziale, che sta crescendo nella sua rilevanza strategica, si deve ripensare la concezione di conflitto. Questo, ai giorni nostri, viene strutturato sempre più come uno sforzo congiunto dei dipartimenti della difesa di ciascun paese, facendo leva sullo sfruttamento dei singoli caratteri che ciascun corpo apporta allo sforzo bellico; occorrerà adesso introdurre anche quelli che possono apportare le forze spaziali. Queste ultime, come ricorda Colin Gray, vengono già sfruttate a livello di comunicazione e ricerca della posizione del nemico, ma potrebbero essere maggiormente integrate insieme alla nuova dimensione cibernetica.

Nel secondo e terzo capitolo oggetto del mio approfondimento sono state le funzioni delle marine, comunque già emerse dall'analisi dell'evoluzione del pensiero strategico navale. Le attività delle marine sono essenzialmente di tre tipi: militari, di polizia e benigne. Le prime si distinguono in quanto sono tradizionalmente operazioni delle marine militari svolte in periodi bellici e si caratterizzano per un ampio utilizzo della forza; mentre, le funzioni di polizia, sono quelle legate al mantenimento dell'ordine e quindi, seppur adoperando le forze navali, fanno un uso limitato della forza, impiegata unicamente come strumento di legittima difesa. A queste, si aggiungono le missioni benigne che sono maggiormente dirette alla ricerca e soccorso, e che quindi non hanno necessità di schierare forze armate o di utilizzare la forza. Queste tre funzioni possono comunque integrarsi l'una con l'altra a seconda della complessità dello scenario in cui vengono impiegate, oppure in base alla necessità o meno di servirsi di forze armate in supporto.

Nel secondo capitolo, nello specifico, mi sono focalizzato sull'analisi delle funzioni delle marine in operazioni belliche. Partendo dall'approfondimento delle funzioni tradizionali, pur sempre attuali, come quelle di controllo del mare, della guerra economico-commerciale e della proiezione della potenza sulla costa attraverso missioni anfibie, ho spostato l'attenzione sulle nuove funzioni che le marine stanno oggi assumendo. Un esempio può essere l'utilizzo di sottomarini nucleari lanciamissili balistici (SSBN) come strumento di deterrenza nel confronto nucleare tra le varie potenze. Un'altra funzione potrebbe essere l'impiego della diplomazia navale. Quest'ultima è divenuta molto importante proprio per le caratteristiche intrinseche della forza navale che può essere impiegata in scenari geografici molto distanti tra loro, apportando una discreta pressione e non arrecando gli stessi problemi che porrebbero altri tipi di forze. Un aspetto peculiare della diplomazia navale è la possibilità di poter ritirare le navi sfruttando le vie di comunicazione marittime, senza provocare alcun disonore alla nazione. All'interno dello stesso capitolo viene trattata anche una questione particolarmente recente che ha alimentato preoccupazioni nella comunità internazionale: l'emergere

di attori che non godono delle proprietà statali ma che comunque possiedono delle capacità tali da minacciare gli interessi degli stati.

Altro fattore rilevante è la crescente minaccia del terrorismo internazionale, tema che verrà ripreso nel terzo capitolo dove invece ho trattato delle operazioni navali impiegate in periodi di pace. Queste ultime, un tempo considerate un elemento trascurabile per le strategie navali, hanno visto dopo la fine della Seconda Guerra Mondiale un cambiamento radicale nella loro concezione divenendo oggi indispensabili per il perseguimento degli interessi nazionali. La trasformazione della concezione strategico-militare è stata talmente radicale all'interno delle forze navali da essere considerata una rivoluzione: in questo senso oggi le marine, in confronto al passato, rivestono maggiore importanza nei periodi di pace rispetto a quelli di guerra. Basti pensare all'importanza che è stata attribuita alla funzione della diplomazia navale. Le diverse tecnologie marittime sono state utilizzate sia in funzione di deterrenza, quindi in senso difensivo per mostrare le capacità di un paese, sia nella funzione di *compellence*, quindi in senso proattivo come mezzi impiegati per influenzare, attraverso azioni di pressione, le decisioni politiche di un avversario piuttosto che quelle di un alleato.

Il progresso nella visione strategico-militare delle marine è stato incoraggiato da una crescente interconnessione globale soprattutto legata al rafforzamento del commercio internazionale. Oggi, rispetto al passato, la maggiore influenza economica viene determinata dal volume degli scambi con altri paesi. Di conseguenza, è sorta la necessità di proteggere le vie di comunicazione, che sono principalmente marittime. Circa il 90% del commercio internazionale infatti, riportano UNCTAD e *International Chamber of Shipping*, passa attraverso il mare; mentre per alcuni paesi, come il Regno Unito, questo dato è ancora più rilevante (arrivando anche al 95%). Senza dimenticare che la prima potenza economico-militare del pianeta, gli Stati Uniti d'America, mantengono il proprio primato attraverso la protezione delle linee di comunicazione marittima. Queste sono sorvegliate dalle loro flotte interconnesse attraverso una rete di circa 150 basi navali sparse per il globo, necessarie per il controllo dei punti di passaggio fondamentali: i cosiddetti *chokepoints*.

Altro elemento da considerare è l'importanza dei cavi sottomarini di comunicazione emersa con la rivoluzione tecnologica dagli anni '80 in poi. Infatti, la maggior parte delle reti telefoniche o di internet, di cui noi usufruiamo quotidianamente, passano attraverso cavi posati sul fondale marino. Una loro eventuale interruzione comporterebbe un danno economico, sociale e umano molto consistente, data la nostra sempre maggiore dipendenza da queste tecnologie, che sarà sempre più marcata in futuro. Di conseguenza, la protezione di queste linee di comunicazione è divenuta una esigenza sia a livello nazionale che globale.

Tra le funzioni delle potenze navali che emergono di più durante i periodi di pace si possono considerare la protezione dell'ambiente marittimo, le funzioni anti-terrorismo, che si stanno

ritagliando una posizione sempre più rilevante all'interno delle politiche strategiche degli stati, e infine, le missioni anti-pirateria. Rispetto a queste ultime ho approfondito in particolare gli sforzi bellici lungo le coste somale promossi da organizzazioni e alleanze internazionali come la NATO, con le sue tre operazioni avvicendatesi dal 2008 al 2016 (*Allied Provider*, *Allied Protector* e *Ocean Shield*), e l'Unione Europea che nel 2008 ha lanciato un'operazione, chiamata EUNAVFOR Atalanta, attiva ancora oggi.

Nel quarto e ultimo capitolo della tesi, infine, mi sono voluto concentrare sulla strategia navale di un paese tradizionalmente famoso per la sua potenza marittima, il Regno Unito, che, sulla base del controllo delle linee di comunicazione marittima, ha sviluppato la sua influenza globale di cui ha goduto e di cui, anche se in misura minore, gode ancora tutt'oggi. L'analisi della dottrina strategica britannica che emerge dalla prima edizione di *Fundamentals of British Maritime Doctrine* del 1995, mi ha permesso di capire in senso pratico in cosa, oggi, il *Ministry of Defence* si focalizzi rispetto all'articolazione delle proprie strategie navali. Sebbene questo capitolo dia maggiormente l'idea di come il Regno Unito configuri le proprie forze marittime e in quali aspetti si concentri principalmente, un'analisi di questo tipo è stata comunque fondamentale per la comprensione in senso lato delle tendenze a livello globale sul tema della strutturazione della potenza navale.

Partendo dai principi che la difesa britannica ha definito come la base di tutte le sue operazioni militari, mi sono poi avventurato nell'analisi di tutte le maggiori funzioni svolte dalla marina britannica riscontrando tutto sommato una convergenza con quelle tradizionalmente portate avanti dalle marine militari del passato. In più, emerge una centralità del ruolo della Royal Navy nel quadro della deterrenza nucleare, che è divenuta di importanza vitale per tutti quei paesi che godono di questo genere di capacità. Altro elemento che spesso viene evidenziato è l'importanza delle *Joint operations*, come ad esempio quelle condotte attraverso l'unione delle varie forze della difesa nazionale (mare, terra, aria) oppure quelle operazioni interforze gestite all'interno di alleanze internazionali come la NATO. Qui emerge l'idea di una nazione che, seppure limitata dalle sue risorse economiche e militari rispetto ad altre potenze come gli Stati Uniti, aspira comunque ad una posizione di spicco nel panorama internazionale. Questo obiettivo viene perseguito concentrandosi sul suo *status* e sui vantaggi che può garantire la partecipazione ad un'alleanza internazionale come la NATO, cercando di ricoprire una posizione di primo piano attraverso l'apporto di truppe e il coinvolgimento delle proprie forze armate nelle varie operazioni. Infatti, il Regno Unito, paese tradizionalmente atlantista, ha dimostrato spesso il suo impegno all'interno dell'Alleanza Atlantica mirando ad assumere un ruolo di modello per gli altri paesi del blocco occidentale.

Procedendo nell'analisi del quarto capitolo ho esaminato tutti quelli che sono i mezzi che la Royal Navy impiega nei diversi scenari di guerra e come la stessa stia evolvendo la sua condizione: dove si

stia rafforzando e quali, invece, siano i settori più trascurati. Ho poi cercato di capire, anche ai fini della domanda iniziale della mia tesi, quale sia l'importanza della Royal Navy per il Regno Unito. In questo senso va evidenziato come un paese, che geograficamente goda di una condizione di insularità, abbia maggiore necessità rispetto ad altri di dotarsi di una forte marina. Questa gli permette di difendere al meglio i propri interessi, soprattutto di natura economica, sparsi per il mondo e, allo stesso tempo, di proiettare la propria influenza mantenendo quello *status* di grande potenza a cui tanto aspira. Inoltre, un forte apparato navale pronto ad ogni necessità, grazie all'addestramento del suo personale e alla diversa tipologia di mezzi su cui può fare leva, è necessario se si vuole avere una posizione di spicco all'interno di missioni internazionali o, soprattutto, se si vuole collaborare al meglio con le forze di altri paesi. Un altro elemento che va sottolineato è quello legato alla funzione di deterrenza nucleare che viene spesso evidenziata all'interno della dottrina strategica britannica. Questo fatto permette di comprendere come le marine si siano pienamente integrate all'interno del contesto nucleare, divenendo uno strumento necessario per quei paesi che possiedano un potenziale nucleare. Ad esempio, attraverso i sottomarini, le testate vengono trasportate e, pertanto difese, oppure impiegate in funzioni offensive e difensive. Queste ultime funzioni, come abbiamo visto, sono molto importanti in quanto risulta fondamentale per qualsiasi paese dotarsi al giorno d'oggi di armi nucleari. Queste determinano una condizione di superiorità rispetto ad altri paesi e garantiscono uno *status* di quasi invincibilità. Non è mai capitato, infatti, che paesi che possedessero armi nucleari subissero attacchi diretti contro il proprio territorio metropolitano.

Per cogliere l'importanza delle forze navali è stato necessario analizzare quali sono i loro attributi, e perciò, quali potenzialità intrinseche possiedono e quali possono conferire all'intero del sistema di difesa nazionale per un miglior perseguimento dei propri fini.

A questo punto del lavoro sono stato in grado di elaborare le mie conclusioni e di rispondere al quesito che mi sono posto all'inizio dell'attività di ricerca. Inizialmente mi sono chiesto quale fosse la rilevanza e il ruolo rivestito dalle marine oggi. In questo lavoro ho potuto comprendere come, sopratutto nel mondo globalizzato, i ruoli da esse svolti siano tanti. In *primis*, esse rilevano nella difesa del commercio marittimo fra paesi, principalmente mantenendo il controllo di alcune aree geografiche oppure, garantendo la difesa da minacce derivanti, per esempio, dalla pirateria o dal terrorismo. Altro elemento da evidenziare è il loro ruolo di salvaguardia dei cavi sottomarini di comunicazione, che potrebbero subire un serio danno a causa di un attacco nemico determinando così una grave crisi all'interno del paese. Inoltre, si può segnalare la loro capacità intrinseca di adattarsi a missioni congiunte con altre forze e, per di più, con altri paesi; una questione sempre più sentita al giorno d'oggi visto il numero delle missioni internazionali che sono state portate avanti negli ultimi anni come quelle in Iraq e Afghanistan. Si deve poi rimarcare la possibilità di impiegare le forze

navali in maniera efficace all'interno di missioni diplomatiche, potendo così proiettare la propria influenza in altri paesi.

In conclusione, le forze navali sono in grado di svolgere funzioni a tutto tondo sia in periodi di pace che in periodi di guerra, contribuendo al perseguimento di tantissimi obiettivi che possono essere considerati fondamentali dagli stati. Questo ha fatto sì che, nonostante la maggiore attenzione dei paesi verso le tecnologie belliche termo-nucleari, e sebbene le marine siano state impiegate con ruoli che potremmo considerare di secondo piano rispetto a quelli che rivestivano in precedenza, le forze navali sono comunque state capaci di procurarsi una posizione relativamente centrale all'interno delle politiche strategiche dei vari paesi. Per questo motivo gli stati hanno investito e continuano a investire ingenti risorse per rafforzare, o comunque mantenere stabile, il proprio potenziale navale così da proteggere al meglio i propri interessi e allo stesso tempo proiettare con maggiore efficacia la propria influenza a livello globale.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Command of Defence Council. (1995). *The Fundamentals of British Maritime Doctrine. BR1806.* London. Her Majesty's Stationary Office (HMSO).

Corbett J. S. (2017). *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy.* [Original Version 1911]. Scotts Valley. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Crisher B. B. and Souva M. (2014). *Power at Sea: A Naval Power Dataset. 1865–2011. In* International Interactions. 40:4. Published online: 22 Jul 2014. pp. 602-629.

Dodge P. (2005). *China's Naval Strategy and Nuclear Weapons: The Risks of Intentional and Inadvertent Nuclear Escalation. In* Comparative Strategy. 24:5. pp. 415-430. DOI: 10.1080/01495930500448947.

Epkenhans M., Hillmann J. & Nägler F. (2015). *Jutland: World War I's Greatest Naval Battle.* [ebook] The University Press of Kentucky.

Fahron-Hussey C. (2019). *Military Crisis Management Operations by NATO and the EU. The Decision-Making Process.* Wiesbaden. Springer VS.

Gentili A. (1598). *De Jure Bellum libri Tres.*

Gorshkov S.G. (1979). *The Sea Power of the State.* Translated by United States Joint Publication Research Service. (1980).

Gray C. S. (1994). *The Navy in the post-Cold War world. The uses and value of Strategic Sea Power.* Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Hager J. (2014). *A Beginner's Guide to Navy (Armed Forces for Naval Warfare).* Delhi. The English Press.

Haines S. (2016). *War at sea: Nineteenth-century laws for twenty-first century wars?. In* International review of the red cross. pp. 419-447.

Hauser B. (2010). *The Evolution of strategy.* Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Homan K. and Kamerling S. (2010). *Operational Challenges to Counterpiracy Operations off the coast of Somalia. In* Van Ginkel B. and Van Der Putten, F.-P. T*he International response to Somali piracy: challenges and opportunities.* Leiden. Brill – Nijhoff Publishers.

Internation Institute of Humanitarian Law. (1994). *San Remo Manual on International Law Applicable to Armed Conflicts at Sea.*

Klein N. (2011). *Maritime security and the law of the sea.* Oxford. Oxford University Press.

Kraska J. (2011). *Maritime Power and the Law of the Sea: Expeditionary Operations in World Politics*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.

Kraska J. And Pedrozo R. (2013). *International Maritime Security Law*. Leiden. Martinus Nijhoff Pubblishers. pp. 70-73.

Mahan A.T. (2012). *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*. [Original Version 1890]. [ebook] Dover Publications.

Miller S. E. And Van Evera S. (2014). *Naval strategy and National Security.* Princeton. Princeton University Press.

Morgan-Owen D. (2015). A *Revolution in Naval Affairs? Technology, Strategy and British Naval Policy in the 'Fisher Era'. In* Journal of Strategic Studies. Published on May 11, 2015. pp. 944-965.

Nimitz C.W. (1947). *Report to Secretary of the Navy. December.* Reprinted by Brassery's Naval Annual. Portsmouth. (1948).

Pandolfe F. C. (2016). *The Evolution of modern U.S. naval strategy. In* Naval War College Review. Volume 69; Issue 4; ISSN:00281484. pp. 7-13.

Papastavridis E. (2014) *The Interception of Vessels on the High Seas: Contemporary Challenges to the Legal Order of the Oceans.* London. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Paret P. (edited by). Craig G. A. & Gilbert F. (1986) *Makers of modern strategy*. Princeton. Princeton University Press. [Labanca N. (edited by), Baldini M. (traduced by) & Rossi A. (traduced by) (1992). *Guerra e strategia nell'età contemporanea. In* Forum per i problemi della pace e della guerra. Genova. Marietti editore].

Phifer H. (2014). *Handbook of Naval Warfare and Tactics. Delhi.* World Technologies.

Ronzitti N. (2014). *Diritto Internazionale dei conflitti armati.* Fifth Edition. [First Edition 1998]. Torino. Giappichelli editore.

Speller I. (2016). *Naval Warfare. In* Jordan D., Lonsdale D. J., Kiras J. D., Speller I., Tuck C. & Walton C. D. *Understanding Modern Warfare*, Second Edition. [First Edition 2008] Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Till G. (1982). *Maritime strategy and nuclear age*, London. Macmillan LTD.

Von Clausewitz, C. (2008). *On War.* [Original Edition *Von Kriege* (1832)]. [ebook] Princeton University Press.

Woodward, C.V. (2007). *The Battle for Leyte Gulf: The Incredible Story of World War II's Largest Naval Battle.* [ebook] Skyhorse.

You Ji (July 2016). *China's Emerging Indo-Pacific Naval Strategy. In* Asia Policy. Number 22. pp. 11-19.