

**“Moving East and South: U.S. Navy and German Navy Strategy in the Eurasian Theater 1991-2014, A View from Germany”**

## **Introduction**

The Cold War ended rather suddenly in 1991. With it went the model on which the United States’ maritime strategy of the 1980s had rested. Driven by individuals like John Lehman, President Ronald Reagan’s long-time Secretary of the Navy, that series of strategic documents promulgated a forward, offensive, counter-force approach and the famous ‘600-ship Navy’ force structure.

With the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union on December 25, 1991, the sole challenger to U.S. naval power vanished practically overnight. Red Fleet warships were rusting away in port or dismantled altogether. In the United States, the military lost significant human capital through a number of force reduction rounds, which reflected how the U.S. Navy could and would take on the post-Cold War world intellectually. In the wake of this strategic recalibration, allied militaries and their navies—such as the Federal German Navy, soon to be renamed German Navy—also underwent substantial transformations. These were often guided by the shifting geopolitical landscape as well as the popular desire to reduce the inflated defense budgets of Cold War days in order to obtain a peace dividend.

This analysis will focus on the Eurasian theater—very broadly speaking, the waters that surround the European and Southwest Asian landmasses<sup>2</sup>—in U.S. and German naval strategy between 1991 and 2014. The maritime sphere has become increasingly important as a domain of emerging security since the end of the Cold War, yet comparatively little time and resources are being devoted to research on naval strategy and relationships between allies at sea. As a result, the use of naval force for political and diplomatic ends and the dynamics of maritime geopolitics have suffered.

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<sup>2</sup> The Baltic Sea, the North Sea, the Norwegian Sea, the Arctic Sea, the (Eastern) Atlantic, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Black Sea, the Arabian Gulf, and the (Western) Indian Ocean.

This essay seeks to underline the challenges that have confronted the U.S. Navy in the past generation and analyze their long-term effects. While the U.S. Navy's geographic focus and operational interests have increasingly shifted from Europe to the Middle East and Asia, and from control of the "blue water" high seas to the littorals, these key interests should not be overlooked.

In the view of the author, the fall of the Soviet Union and the implication that allies like Germany would do more to patrol their own maritime neighborhood provided the U.S. Navy with a convenient reason to de-emphasize their previously highly valued naval hub in the Mediterranean Sea. In rebalancing from the Sixth Fleet area of responsibility (AOR) to other regions of the world, the U.S. Navy accepted the consequences for fleet design and ship numbers, perhaps willingly using it as a bargaining chip for force reduction rounds in Washington, D.C. Implicitly, European allies and the U.S. Air Force<sup>3</sup> were expected to fill the gap left behind in terms of naval presence and crisis response, in particular after the successful campaigns in the Adriatic Sea in responding to unrest and war in the Balkans. European allies, however, were largely uninterested in stepping up to the plate; they considered their near abroad safe enough. Most importantly, they were somewhat wary of delivering a combined 'pocket Sixth Fleet' of their own. Finally, they were preoccupied with managing German unification, enlargement of the European Union, and establishing a common market and currency, among other things. Accordingly, this paper sheds a light on some key German strategic documents for a time when the reunited country sought its new place in the security environment of the post-Cold War world.

By taking a unique view from Germany, one of the U.S. Navy's premier NATO allies, this analysis also considers the transformation of the *Bundesmarine* from an escort navy to an expeditionary navy.<sup>4</sup> It seeks to conceptually explain how Germany's security policy addressed the maritime challenges of the new era. The German Navy was principally drawn south- and eastward geographically after 1991, usually in close cooperation with other allied and friendly navies (and mandated by NATO, the EU, or the UN).<sup>5</sup> It was increasingly asked to address maritime security challenges to which the U.S. Navy no longer, or only in a supporting role, responded. The German Navy went into the breach with what were essentially

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Swartz, email to author, 04 September 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Chiari (2007), pp. 127-139.

<sup>5</sup> White Paper on the Security of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Situation and Future of the Bundeswehr 1994

Cold War assets and a mindset fundamentally dominated by the inability to think strategically.

This paper is split into two sections. The first section discusses the 1991-2001 timeframe and the second section covers the period from 2001-2014. 2001 marked the inauguration of President George W. Bush in January and the terrorist attacks on September 11 eight months later. Each section looks at the strategic developments of the U.S. Navy and the German Navy, their major naval operations, and some areas of cooperation between the two navies in Eurasia.

### **Strategic Shifts, Crisis Management, and Embracing and Empowering of Allies (1991-2001)**

The strategic change of the post-1991 world was nothing short of fundamental. Where the old security environment was rigidly bipolar, leading to a certain—if dangerous—predictability of the Communist bloc, the emerging environment fashioned itself as multipolar, complex, and rather uncertain. Alliances such as NATO and international organizations such as the UN underwent significant changes in their mandates, and policy-makers' expectations towards them often oscillated between high hopes and deep disappointments. The U.S. faced substantially more diverse but much more ambiguous threats. These were no longer directed at U.S. survival (such as a nuclear-tipped conflict over Germany), but rather at U.S. interests (such as regional instability, proliferation, or terrorism). Needing to reevaluate the costs and effects of deterrence, naval missions such as power projection and expeditionary operations became more important.<sup>6</sup>

The U.S. Navy was well suited to address this new complex security environment given its practice as a forward present, combat-ready, and credible force. Intellectually, it retained such a posture and outlook into the 1990s, navigating a number of force-structure reviews such as the Bottom-Up Review (BUR) without too many bruises. In fact, “From the Sea” (1992) and “Forward... From the Sea” (1994) provided the U.S. Navy with a conceptual framework that focused on the littorals and coastal waters—an area to which, as a Norwegian analyst has pointed out, America’s blue-water navy would simply be shifted, rather than be

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<sup>6</sup> Bruns (2015), p. 184.

re-built from scratch.<sup>7</sup> Established Cold War naval missions such as anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-air warfare (AAW), anti-surface warfare (ASuW), and escort duties diminished in importance. Amphibious capabilities, strike, sea-based ballistic missile defense (BMD), humanitarian assistance and disaster relief tasks (HA/DR), more general maritime security operations (MSO), and patrol and presence tasks rose in relevance.

The evolution of U.S. Naval Forces Europe from a “steel-gray stabilizer”<sup>8</sup> of Cold War days into a slimmer, effective crisis management tool for the emerging conflicts thus remained in a fledging stage. In 1990s Washington, the predominant political elite asked a lot from its Navy. The service would have to simultaneously shrink its fleet size while retaining a sensible force structure, speak to how it would address challenges of the emerging post-Cold War security environment, and still serve as a ‘Swiss Army knife’ to the demands of the Clinton administration’s foreign policy. The European theater, once the front-line of the bipolar conflict, risked dropping off the map.

The trade-off was a substantially decreased military presence in Europe, which yielded a significant reduction of ship numbers and a markedly different posture in particular in the Sixth Fleet AOR.<sup>9</sup> In any case, the military focus of the United States increasingly moved ‘East of Suez’: The Arabian Gulf and the Horn of Africa became focal points of military action in the early 1990s, even if the Mediterranean remained the site of some major naval operations.<sup>10</sup>

The shift in geopolitical focus areas also left the German military out. If Germany were a book, it would best be characterized as a coming-of-age novel. Germany had recently been reunited and began a process of reconciliation and the rebuilding the former East German economy when the Gulf War broke out in the summer of 1990. During those early years, Chancellor Helmut Kohl (a conservative within a liberal-conservative coalition government) was able to mute allied requests for German boots on the ground through checkbook diploma-

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<sup>7</sup> Lundesgaard (2011), p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Papadopoulos (2005), n.p.

<sup>9</sup> Many critics who today blame the deteriorating security in the Mediterranean perimeter in the wake of the 2011 Arab Spring, and the lack of American political and military leverage, on the withdrawal of major force projecting naval units from the theater often fail to recognize that the strategic outlook of the 1990s – and the corresponding foreign policy of President Bill Clinton – simply did not lend itself to maintaining a forward hub like in the Cold War days. What they imply, however, is still valid: naval forces are expensive, but once they are withdrawn or scaled down, it is difficult to stand them back up quickly. For an example, see McGrath/Eaglen (2014). As a Captain (USN), Bryan McGrath was the lead author of the “Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower” (2007).

<sup>10</sup> Bruns (2014), pp. 225-232.

cy.<sup>11</sup> The effort to punish Iraq for invading its neighbor, Kuwait, was backed diplomatically by a UN Security Council mandate. It also mustered a broad coalition of countries from both former Cold War camps. Still, the German public did not express much sympathy for the U.S.-led military campaign to oust Saddam Hussein from the Emirate. Large organized anti-war protests brought droves of people to German streets and market squares in January and February 1991. In the Rhineland, even the annual *Karneval* street festivities (a traditional equivalent to Mardi Gras in New Orleans) were cancelled.<sup>12</sup>

What is often forgotten, but was hardly uncontroversial at the time from the viewpoint of the German public (and that of some allies), was Germany's important naval contribution in the wake of the Gulf War. "Operation Südflanke" (Operation Southern Flank) ran from 16 August 1990 through 13 September 1991. The German Navy was tasked with supporting the alliance by deploying naval assets in the Eastern Mediterranean—in part to assure partners in the region, but also to fill the void left by the shift of allied troops and ships to the Gulf region. The naval task group of minesweepers and tenders was supplemented by two destroyers, two frigates, and two replenishment ships. Surprisingly, the German Navy, which just a few summers ago had focused exclusively on the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, and parts of the North Atlantic, was now temporarily forward-deployed to Souda Bay, Greece. In the second stage of the operation, the mine-countermeasure ships were deployed to the Persian Gulf to sweep the area in question. Mines posed a serious threat to the naval forces operating in the area. For example, the U.S. Navy's amphibious assault ship *Tripoli* (LPH 10) suffered significant damages after hitting a mine on 18 February 1991.<sup>13</sup>

After the Middle East dropped off news headlines, the focus of U.S. foreign policy briefly shifted to East Africa. The humanitarian intervention in Somalia resulted in a loss of life and the hasty withdrawal of troops and personnel. The German Navy, having all but absorbed the consequences of taking over the remnants of the East German People's Navy, was eventually dispatched to Mogadishu in an effort to support the removal of German UN blue helmets in the spring of 1994 (Operation Southern Cross).<sup>14</sup>

By then, Europe had once again caught the attention of U.S. foreign policy. The Clinton Doctrine sought to stabilize former Warsaw Pact member states through economic inte-

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<sup>11</sup> This was, in part, also motivated by constitutional concerns. The German Supreme Court ruled only in 1994 that German military deployments abroad – outside of European Union/NATO areas – were constitutional.

<sup>12</sup> BBC (2016), n.p.

<sup>13</sup> Schneller (2007), p. 29.

<sup>14</sup> Hoch (1994), pp. 230-232.

gration in order to encourage processes of democratization, prosperity, freedom, and value-based politics. America's relationship with Russia, the main survivor of the disintegrated Soviet Union, was also of premier importance. Militarily and diplomatically, NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program provided the political avenue to engage with Moscow.<sup>15</sup>

Kinetically, the Balkan Wars required substantial military and diplomatic attention. It was only after U.S. intervention that the conflicting parties were amenable to a peace agreement. An international naval coalition, under U.S. leadership and with German participation, upheld an embargo against the warring parties in the Adriatic Sea.<sup>16</sup> This major naval operation gave Germany an opportunity to test and train operationally, but it also engraved the idea that naval contributions were a convenient opportunity to show alliance solidarity without committing boots on the ground for a society still fraught with a number of political caveats when it came to expeditionary operations. At the same time, this was neither reflected conceptually or strategically in German thinking, nor in the fleet design.<sup>17</sup>

Germany, a country that expected a serene new world order after managing to peacefully overcome 40 years of division and the frontline status of the superpower conflict, deployed a forward military presence largely through air forces and armies. It was now much less defined by its own or foreign/allied naval forces. This was a function of the existential threat perception that was deeply engraved in the continental (vs. a more maritime) German mindset. It also meant that the German public and policy-makers did not understand the challenges and opportunities associated with the deployment of naval forces.

This contributed to Germany's reluctance to publish a more substantial strategy for the post-Cold War era. The 1994 White Book—the first such publication since 1985, and the last until 2006—was all that was deemed necessary to provide the top cover.<sup>18</sup> The transformation of the German Armed Forces from their Cold War mindset, posture, and materiel was painfully slow. Everything else was left to NATO (to which Sen. Richard Luger famously quipped in 1993, “‘Out of area’ or ‘Out of business’”) and, to a degree, the European Union, which was just emerging at the time to be a more prominent common security and defense institution. Conveniently, recent events had demonstrated that a nation which would occasionally support international military missions, but otherwise keep a backbencher's seat, would fare pretty

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<sup>15</sup> NATO (2005), pp. 4-13.

<sup>16</sup> Papadopoulos (2013), pp. 83-99.

<sup>17</sup> It would, in 2006, be reflected in the organization of the German Navy which then changed from half a dozen type flotillas to two comprehensive flotillas based in Wilhelmshaven and Kiel.

<sup>18</sup> The German defense ministry currently works on the 2016 incarnation of the White Book, the first since 2006.

well. In the absence of territorial threats, Germany could thus increasingly focus on reconciliation, European integration, and general welfare.<sup>19</sup> It also freed the government and the *Bundeswehr* from the most ravaging demands of modernization, critical thinking, and the formulation of a strategic perspective. In hindsight, it appears that the largest transformation was the name of that particular military branch, which was changed from *Bundesmarine* (or Federal German Navy) to *Deutsche Marine* (German Navy).<sup>20</sup>

This is not to imply that the feat of transforming the German Armed Forces into a modern force was anything but easy; unfortunately, in the absence of political guidance of both Chancellor Kohl and his successor Gerhard Schröder (a Social Democrat in a red-green coalition government), there simply was no debate about German interests, the implications of U.S. withdrawal from Europe, or general security political measures other than where the peace dividend could be invested best.

Only in 1999, when NATO conducted an air war against Yugoslavia over Kosovo, did the public debate in the new capital (Berlin) center on security and defense again. The recently elected coalition of Social Democrats and Greens had to fight vigorously to convince their parties of German participation in the effort.

The following table lists the major naval operations of the United States and Germany for the first full post-Cold War decade. It also includes relevant capstone documents of naval strategic scope.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Herfried Münkler, a noted German political scientist, has diagnosed this as a “post-heroic” mindset. Heinz Dieter Jopp’s scathing critique of the lack of a strategy discussion in the public goes back to 1995 (Jopp: 2-4).

<sup>20</sup> The Army (*Deutsches Heer*) and the Air Force (*Luftwaffe*) retained their name over re-unification.

<sup>21</sup> The relevant U.S. documents can be found in Hattendorf (ed., 2006). For details on the 1991-2001 evolution of U.S. Navy capstone documents in context, see Swartz (2012a). Analyses of that period may be found in Lundsgaard (2011: 6-16), Bruns (2015: 173-240), and Haynes (2015: 35-147). For Germany, the documents and, more importantly, sound academic analyses for the naval realm are difficult to come by. Aspects were touched on by Horten (1999) and Lippke (2009: 70-92, 162-184).

	United States of America	Germany
<b>Major Naval Operations in the Eurasian Theatre<sup>22</sup></b>	August 1990-February 1991: Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm	August 1990-September 1991: Operation Southern Flank
	August 1992-March 2003: Operation Southern Watch	
	1992-1994: Somalia	January-April 1994: Operation Southern Cross
	June 1993-October 1996: Operation Sharp Guard <sup>23</sup>	
	March-June 1999: Operation Allied Force	
	STANAVFORLANT, STANAVFORMED, Exercises/Work-Ups (temporarily/on occasion)	
<b>Major Capstone Documents/Policy Reviews<sup>24</sup> (italics denote overarching guidance)</b>	The Way Ahead (1991)	
	<i>Base Force Report</i> (1991)	
	From the Sea (1992)	<i>Defense Policy Guidelines</i> (1992)
	<i>Bottom-Up Review</i> (1993)	
	Forward... From the Sea (1994)	<i>White Book</i> (1994)
	Anytime, Anywhere (1997)	
	<i>Quadrennial Defense Review</i> (1997)	
	Strategic Concept of the [NATO] Alliance (1999)	

Illustration 1: Major Naval Operations, Capstone Documents 1991-2001

On the eve of 11 September 2001, the German Navy was increasingly supporting low-intensity expeditionary operations that the German government by implication—not by strategic clarity—tasked it to do. The U.S. Navy, in the meantime, had to overcome threats to its substantial force structure, battle with the effects of a number of scandals, and address the increasingly littoral challenges of the emerging, unipolar security environment.

### 9/11, Maritime Security, and Europe's Flanks

Soon after the 9/11 attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., a PASSEX (passing exercise) took place at sea off the coast of East Africa. The officers and crew of the

<sup>22</sup> For the purpose of this paper, a major naval operation is understood as the deployment of naval assets in significant numbers to an expeditionary operation, in peacetime, crisis, or war, in joint and combined operations. On the concepts of major naval operations, see Vego (2007).

<sup>23</sup> Two preceding operations were merged: Operation Maritime Guard (NATO) and Operation Sharp Fence (WEU).

<sup>24</sup> A direct comparison of capstone documents is challenging due to the distinct framework conditions (institutionally, politically, etc.) in different countries. The documents often have varying audiences, altitudes, and authors. They are listed here and in illustration 2 merely for the sake of outlining the principal guiding documents of the era for the U.S. Navy and the Germany Navy.

German destroyer *Lütjens* (D 185) rendered honors to the U.S. Navy's guided-missile destroyer *Winston S. Churchill* (DDG 81) by lining the rails in their dress blues as they came alongside in a passing exercise. The German sailors, who had become good friends with many of the crew on board *Churchill*, were flying an American flag at half mast and had hung a homemade banner that read, "We Stand by You." The ships had been conducting joint exercises off the coast of the United Kingdom prior to the terrorist attack on the United States.

Aside from the marked details that should excite almost every naval historian, this encounter signaled a new chapter in U.S.-German relations. The Global War on Terrorism (announced in the wake of the terrorist strikes) finally and fully shifted the focus of the United States away from Europe to the Middle East and Southwest Asia, where they fought the perpetrators and supporters of 9/11 in two larger wars. The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon as well as the downed aircraft in Shanksville, Pennsylvania threw the U.S. off-balance conceptually, and strategists scrambled to bring strategy up to date to the perceived and actual threats. In terms of naval missions, strike warfare and maritime security operations were in increasingly high demand, while the demand (and appreciation for) mine warfare, ASW, AAW, and ASuW further diminished in the absence of a sea control challenger.

Geopolitically, the focus area—dubbed the 'broader Middle East' or even the 'Arc of Instability'—had massive maritime flanks, yet the conflicts were largely land-centric and relied heavily on Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps units. Still, the sea lanes of communication were quickly considered a possible route for terrorist networks to do their harm: "Operation Active Endeavour" in the Mediterranean, to date NATO's only Article 5 operation, and "Operation Enduring Freedom" in the Western Indian Ocean (Task Force 150) were counter-terrorism naval operations with significant U.S. and German naval commitments.<sup>25</sup> When the political and military focus moved to Afghanistan and Iraq (in what turned out to be lengthy and costly ground campaigns), public attention also shifted away from the maritime scene, even as the naval operations continued. In Germany, the Horn of Africa once again became a focal point with the rise of pirate activity in the years until 2008, and the subsequent European

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<sup>25</sup> Seidler (2013), 379-400.

Union counter-piracy effort.<sup>26</sup> In the German Navy's mindset and that of its political masters in Berlin, the European maritime flanks played little to no role.

The United States, under the burden of fighting two wars in the Middle East, shifted its focus away from Europe and its neighbors. Anecdotal, but illustrative nonetheless, is the U.S. Navy's participation in the annual BALTOPS exercise in June in the Baltic Sea, led by the U.S. since 1971. In the 1990s, the heyday of NATO's Partnership for Peace initiative, U.S. participation in the exercise consisted at times of two *Ticonderoga*-class guided-missile cruisers, state-of-the-art attack submarines, or even Coast Guard cutters. Since the turn of the century, the aging command ship *Mount Whitney* (LCC 20), the sole remnant of forward-based U.S. naval power in the Mediterranean, became the principal and largest unit to participate in the exercise (on occasion accompanied by a frigate or a cruiser) to symbolize the shift of attention and resources away from Northern Europe.<sup>27</sup>

Germany too, in what little security outlook it had developed, was principally focused on Afghanistan. Even the brief Russo-Georgian War in 2008 did little to shift attention to a possible return of great-power politics in the Eurasian arena—in part because Germany and the U.S. were devoting considerable attention to the management of a financial crisis.

In the background, two developments of note for naval strategy occurred. First, in the rapid globalization of goods and services, it became clear that the maritime lifelines of the “First World” were more and more vulnerable to disruption, given the amount of cargo transported by ships and often passing through narrow chokepoints on their way from exporter to importer.<sup>28</sup> In parallel, this offered a glimpse into what academic circles labeled as “securitization” of maritime security. As the term broadened, the wording soon meant many different things to many different people.<sup>29</sup> Eventually its meaning and potential political leverage diluted.

At the same time in the U.S., a new maritime strategy was being drawn up. In part to make sense of a Navy in an era of counterinsurgency campaigns in Central Asia, but also in

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<sup>26</sup> For political reasons, Germany is very active in the EU's naval operation, but not in NATO's complementary counter-piracy efforts, nor in the U.S.-led CTF-151.

<sup>27</sup> Even if the U.S. naval presence in Northern European waters was substantial, it fell dramatically short in comparison to the 1980s where, in line with “The Maritime Strategy”, battleships such as the *Iowa* (BB 61) and helicopter carrier/amphibious assault ships pulled into Kiel and the Baltic Sea.

<sup>28</sup> Although the threat of maritime terrorism, in the view of this author, is largely overblown, there were some marked instances of attacks on warships and commercial vessels in the period under observation.

<sup>29</sup> Bueger (2013), pp. 25-36.

part to console allies who were irritated by President George W. Bush's policies, the Navy devised a fundamentally new conceptual idea to explain the use of naval forces in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Instead of emphasizing geographic regions of the world, the defense of maritime trade routes took center stage. This was in principal attractive to allies such as Germany (which was Europe's industrial powerhouse and very dependent on functioning maritime trade). Unfortunately, the capstone document ("A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower", issued in the fall of 2007) never got a complementary force-structure plan and was furthermore subject to the broader political shifts at stake (e.g., policy focus on management of financial crisis, wars in Afghanistan/Iraq, a change of Presidents from George W. Bush to Barack Obama, political gridlock in Washington, the emergence of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy as a peer competitor for the United States, etc.).

In Germany, President Horst Köhler, then Germany's constitutional head of state, carefully articulated that trade routes needed to be defended using military force on 31 May 2010. In an interview, the President had rephrased this notion (having the Horn of Africa in mind), which could already be found in the White Book issued in 2006; the resulting media frenzy led to his early withdrawal from office. The conservative-liberal government voted against deploying the *Bundeswehr* (and the German Navy, for that matter) in the NATO-led operations against Libya in 2011, which underlined Germany's uneasy relationship to the use of force once more. As it stands, this decision occurred for domestic reasons. While politically sensible in hindsight (currently, Libya is descending into civil war and makes for the site of thousands of refugees seeking to cross the Mediterranean), the withdrawal of the frigate *Niedersachsen* (F 208) from the NATO SNMG sent a disastrous signal to Germany's allies. At the same time, the German Navy remained active in OAE and Operation Atalanta, integrated modern air-defense frigates into U.S. aircraft carrier strike groups, and supported an international coalition's effort to neutralize Syrian chemical weapons at sea in 2014.

The following table lists the United States and Germany's major naval operations for the second full post-Cold War decade. It also includes relevant capstone documents of naval strategic scope.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> For details on the evolution of U.S. Navy capstone documents since 2001 in context, see Peter Swartz (2012b). For thorough analyses of that particular period of time, see Lundesgaard (2011: 17-26), Bruns (2015: 241-310), and Haynes (2015: 148-238). For Germany, see Autorenteam Flottenkommando (2012). On NATO, see the recently published German-language analysis by Felix Seidler (2015).

	United States of America	Germany
<b>Major Naval Operations in the Eurasian Theatre</b>	Operation Active Endeavour (since 2002)	
	Operation Enduring Freedom (TF 150) (since 2002, German participation ended)	
	Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003)	
	Tsunami Relief (2004/2005)	
		UNIFIL (2006, ongoing)
	Counter-piracy ops (GER: EU NAVFOR Atalanta; US: CTF-151, NATO's Ocean Shield, since 2008, ongoing)	
	Operation Odyssey Dawn (2011)	
	Operation Reccsy (2014)	
	SNMG 1/2, Exercises/Work-Up (temp./on occasion)	
		SNMCMG 1/2
<b>Major Capstone Documents/Policy Reviews (italics denote overarching guidance)</b>	<i>Quadrennial Defense Review</i> (2001)	
	Sea Power 21 & Global CONOPS (2002)	
		<i>European Union Security Strategy</i> (2003)
	Naval Operations Concept (2006)	
	<i>Quadrennial Defense Review</i> (2006)	<i>White Book</i> (2006)
	CS-21 (2007)	
	Naval Operations Concept (2010)	
	<i>NATO Strategic Concept "Active Engagement, Modern Defence"</i> (2010)	
	<i>Quadrennial Defense Review</i> (2010)	
		<i>Defense-Policy Guidelines</i> (2011)
	<i>[NATO] Alliance Maritime Strategy</i> (2011)	
		<i>European Maritime Security Strategy</i> (2014)

Illustration 2: Major Naval Operations, Capstone Documents 2001-2014

In the decade since 9/11, there has been a considerable uptick in the use of naval forces by the U.S. and Germany even when land-centric thinking and military campaigns dominated the first few years. The development of strategy, naval operations, and the real-world politics is a murky and ultimately chaotic one set to confuse the electorate, motivate the policy-maker to shy away from strategic thinking, and leave it to the political scientist and later, to the naval historian, to try to understand.

## **Conclusion**

After the end of the Cold War, the North Atlantic alliance and Europe enjoyed a sudden period of relative peace and stability. The major geopolitical and intellectual threat that had galvanized strategic thinking and military action for more than four decades had vanished. New challenges emerged quickly, forcing naval forces and their political masters to reorganize to meet them organizationally, strategically, and operationally, at sea.

In the aftermath of 9/11, Southwest Asia was thrust into the focus of world events. Towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century, with potential political-military solutions underway for the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, with the development of a new U.S. maritime strategy (CS-21), and the general conflict fatigue in Europe and North America, the components and conditions of the new multipolar world order began to take shape. The rise of China as a naval and geostrategic competitor was set to occupy the minds of President Barack Obama's administration. Politically, the 'pivot to Asia' insinuated to Europe and the Middle East that the U.S. could potentially leave them alone for good. Recent events in these very regions, such as the rise of the Islamic State and the war in Syria as well as Russian actions have demonstrated is a disheartening sign.

Conceptually and strategically, the 'pivot to Asia' remains a bridge too far for Central Europe. Germany does not regard China, but rather the turmoil in the wake of the 2011 revolutions in the Arab World as well as the fallout of the Euro crisis and the war in Syria as more direct challenges to its security and interests. While it is certainly too soon to call the verdict on what the events since 2014 in the European perimeter really mean, it could very well be that a re-pivot to Europe is already underway. The Sixth Fleet AOR is gaining increasingly more importance, seeing more U.S. naval forward presence, and NATO and the EU hope that their strategies and militaries will be appropriate to the emerging environment. The U.S. Na-

vy's CS-21R, the forthcoming German White Book (2016), and the work-in-progress German maritime strategy will be benchmarks to estimate how much of a crucial political tool naval forces can be, and how much strategic leverage they can provide.

## Abbreviations & Acronyms

AAW	Anti-Air Warfare
AOR	Area of Responsibility
ASuW	Anti-Surface Warfare
ASW	Anti-Submarine Warfare
BALTOPS	Baltic Operations
BMD	Ballistic Missile Defense
CTF	Combined Task Force
EU	European Union
EU NAVFOR	European Union Naval Forces
HA/DR	Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief
MSO	Maritime Security Operations
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PfP	Partnership for Peace
SNMCMG	Standing NATO Mine Counter-Measures Group
SNMG	Standing NATO Maritime Group
STANAVFORLANT	Standing Naval Force Atlantic
STANAVFORMED	Standing Naval Force Mediterranean
WEU	Western European Union
UN	United Nations
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force Lebanon

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