

Global 2008

War game series helps Navy plan for future capabilities to defeat worldwide maritime threats in cooperation with allies

By José Carreño and Antonio Sioridia

In 1979, the Navy initiated the annual Title X Global War Game as part of its Cold War strategy development process. Part of this effort included the analysis of future force structures as part of the Navy's Title X authority to man, train and equip naval forces.

Hosted by the Naval War College in Newport, R.I., these war games were suspended in the years immediately following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, due in part to a lack of "compelling geopolitical reasons," according to Dr. Robert Rubel, Dean of the Center for Naval Warfare Studies at the Naval War College.

However, in response to increased interest by senior Navy and Marine Corps leaders, the Title X Global War Game was reinstated this past summer. The intent of this seminar-style war game is to aid participants' understanding of implications and challenges of implementing the new U.S. maritime strategy: "A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower."

The results from Global '08 will be used to inform capabilities analysis, force design and future concept development. The more immediate results are maritime strategy familiarization and to promote international engagement.

From Aug. 4-8, the war gaming department at the Naval War College hosted Global 2008 on behalf of the Chief of Naval Operations in an effort to examine the challenges, issues and implications of implementing the new U.S. maritime strategy.

The 200 participants consisted of individuals from across the maritime services, the joint community; partner countries including representation from 19 navies; U.S. government agencies; international and nongovernmental organizations; and the shipping and defense industries. International participants added their expertise and perspective to the activities.

Team SPAWAR, the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command, was well represented at Global 2008, which was also attended by members of the director for warfare integration, within the office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Communication Networks (OPNAV N6).

Attendance by OPNAV N6 contributed to participants' understanding of the capabilities — and limitations — of current and emerging naval networks. It also provided members of the Naval NETWAR FORCENet Enterprise (NNFE) with a well-nuanced understanding of the operational needs of Navy, joint, interagency and coalition partners.

To this end, Global 2008 explored how the execution of the maritime strategy might look under one of four alternative futures developed by the Navy strategic planning process, from regional and global perspectives.

The scenarios included variations in cooperation by global partners and also included extremist elements. Players developed perspectives on how their par-

ticular future would look in their specific region through the lens of political, military, economic, social, infrastructure and information (PMESII) concerns, and then identified the maritime tasks and capabilities that would be required for mission success.

Over the course of the week, several overarching themes emerged. The necessity for interagency and international collaboration as a key requirement of successful implementation of the maritime strategy loomed large. To this end, there was an emphasis on practices and technology that facilitate cooperation and coalition building. Moreover, nontraditional and soft power activities were common threads to three of the four alternative futures, with a clear emphasis on activities aligned to the prevention of war.

With respect to the technology requirements that emerged from Global 2008, one must first caveat that by the game's very nature, specific platforms and systems were not discussed. Instead, looking to the broader themes that emerged from the game, in many of these scenarios one could surmise the applicability of critical technologies to enable the missions that were forecasted by playing out the scenarios.

Consider that the number and size of Navy ships is not likely to increase, but the importance of protecting the global commons will increase. The ability to quickly aggregate forces in response to disruptions to the global system becomes paramount. These disruptions run the gamut from natural disasters and their accompanying humanitarian and disaster relief missions, to pirate attacks in and out of the sea lines of communication, to kinetic missions in response to rogue state and non-state actors, to traditional conflicts with major powers.

Game participants generally agreed that increased maritime domain awareness and information sharing, particularly with organizations outside of the Defense Department, would fill an important requirement in response to a global crisis.

In terms of the kind of technologies that may be needed to support and enable a more agile Navy, one area that comes to mind is more robust C4ISR, or command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, capabilities.

“Daily media communications illustrate that we live in a fast-paced, interconnected and volatile environment. Nonetheless, it is reassuring to know that as guardians of peace, our United States Navy is continually postured across the globe to protect our nation’s interests. SPAWARRIORS should be equally proud of our continuing contributions in sustaining and advancing our nation’s war on terrorism through science and technology, research and development, and actual installation and sustainment of critical C4ISR and space systems.

“Whether human assistance/disaster relief missions, combating piracy or high-end warfare, SPAWARRIORS are directly contributing to our nation’s national security. Likewise, SPAWAR’s contributions to CNO’s modeling and simulation endeavors, and our most recent support to the Global War Game 2008, illustrate that our role is now expanding.

“I am most proud of our SPAWARRIORS that both supported and participated in Global War Game 2008. Their endeavors highlighted the criticality of our systems in fostering collaboration with interagency, nongovernmental and international organizations in executing a maritime strategy that directly supports our combatant commanders. And equally important, they have significantly contributed to posturing our Navy to better understand and respond to future world events.”

Rear Adm. Michael C. Bachmann
Commander, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command
Oct. 14, 2008

Likewise, operational integration across the services, which presents numerous issues today, will need to become seamless; while the ability to effortlessly operate with our international partners, commercial entities, NGOs and other stakeholders will be the linchpin for a global maritime system.

Doing more with less, the watchword for tomorrow’s maritime forces, requires close collaboration. While not explicitly discussed in the game, one could conclude that several technologies in development today may provide the means for the future Navy to perform more tasks with fewer resources.

First, the increasing importance of unmanned systems could serve as a force multiplier allowing not only better ISR, but also strike capabilities across all war-fighting platforms.

As pointed out by the Naval Studies Board, “these critical surveillance applications can provide high-leverage knowledge that acts as a force multiplier” for a wide range of missions.

For the Navy to become a more agile force, streamlining manpower requirements is extremely important due to the increasingly high costs of manning, equipping, and training Sailors and Marines. In response to those forcing functions, the second technology trend, better human-systems integration comes into focus.

This begins with interfaces leveraging best practices from today, and technologies of tomorrow, to create the hardware

and software that can allow a well-trained 2nd class operations specialist to provide the same or higher level of situational awareness that several Sailors do today.

This will require a C4ISR suite capable of handling thousands of bits of discrete data from many sources and synthesizing these bits of information for a distributed C4I reach-back capability. This integration of commercial, geographic, financial, intelligence and military data sources into a C4I system will help users develop plans of action based on all the available knowledge and information.

The emerging taxonomy known as “Intelligent Composeability” captures the essence of this capability and is one that Team SPAWAR continues to develop as part of its technical vision.

Achieving the ability to “intelligently compose” the capabilities demanded in the operational environment will require a host of technologies including better use of existing bandwidth to support the huge throughput of data required for this to work, through a combination of better data compression, increased data rate technologies, and more efficient use of the radio frequency spectrum.

Along the same lines, a high level of integration within the ship’s systems must be complemented by a tightly integrated maritime force, requiring robust data standards, common software and hardware architecture, and in close cooperation with our allies.

Global 2008, by virtue of the alternative futures presented, provided participants

with a complex world requiring them to identify issues and derive missions, tasks and capabilities to deal with a set of realistic threats. Based on these futures, participants concluded that the military, and in particular the maritime forces, will be increasingly asked to perform a diverse range of missions including many nontraditional ones to support ad hoc coalitions of joint, interagency, multinational, commercial and nongovernmental organizations.

Participation by Team SPAWAR and the NNFE at Global 2008 contributed to the participants’ understanding of the importance of robust C4ISR networks in accomplishing this mission set. For Team SPAWAR participants, it also provided an opportunity to understand how technologies in development today may apply in a range of possible futures.

Once analysis is complete, long-range results from Global 2008 are intended to provide the Navy with strategies for future efforts such as the Quadrennial Defense Review. The analysis will also shape the decision to hold future games in this series.

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