



Lying to Ourselves

Has the U.S. Navy Become the Imperial Japanese Navy of 1941?

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Abstract: The U.S. Navy's current trajectory may remind the reader of the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) prior to the outbreak of World War II in the Pacific in late 1941. This article argues that many of the same problems the

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IJN faced against its larger U.S. opponent in World War II exist today in the U.S. Navy's planning and preparation for possible conflict with the People's Republic of China. Problems that both navies share include brittle readiness, planning for a short war with a resulting doctrine to match, and a fleet that is too small to sustain any form of attritional war at sea. The article further argues that in many senses the U.S. Navy is less prepared today than was the IJN in 1941. The author provides several recommendations for how to begin to correct these difficulties.

Keywords: U.S. Navy, Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN), decisive battle doctrine, attrition, global combatant commanders, readiness, China, People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), defense reform

We have met the enemy and he is us.

~ Walt Kelly¹

Recently, the U.S. Navy's chief of naval operations (CNO), Admiral Michael M. Gilday, decried a "culture of poor self-assessment" in the Navy that has led to the fleet's acknowledged problems ranging from poor readiness to substandard leadership and performance. The leadership of the fleet, at all levels, has been lying to itself.² This self-deception, however, encompasses a greater range of issues than even the CNO's alarming "fess up" reflects. Vice Admiral Daryl L. Caudle, commander of United States Fleet Forces Command, puts it this way: "We need to be offended by not having the right manning. We need to be offended by not getting ships out at the right time.

. . . It needs to be palpable, and not just like, 'Okay,' and just kind of kick the can down the road."³ This is not the fleet the United States wants to face the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) in the Indo-Pacific, the Russian Navy in European waters, or the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy in the Strait of Hormuz.

The Imperial Japanese Navy and Cultural Honesty

The U.S. Navy's current trajectory reminds one of the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) prior to the outbreak of World War II in the Pacific in late 1941. The IJN was then one of the three largest fleets in the world, its force structure initially underwritten by treaty after the Washington Naval Conference in 1922. However, this treaty embittered many inside the IJN because it gave a smaller ration of naval strength to Japan in relation to the United Kingdom and United States. As the Washington conference was ending, IJN vice admiral Kato Kanji proclaimed that "war with America starts now. We'll get our revenge over this by God!"⁴ Although limited in battleships and aircraft carriers to three-fifths the size of the U.S. Navy, the IJN was not limited in the number of aircraft, cruisers, destroyers, submarines, and auxiliaries it could build. Additionally, the IJN was not constrained in building a land-based bomber force as was the U.S. Navy by the MacArthur-Pratt agreement in 1931.⁵ By the time of the London Naval Conference in 1930, the IJN had near-equivalence in submarines and active destroyers to the U.S. Navy as well as almost 80 percent of the U.S. Navy's inventory of cruisers, with a trend toward eventual superiority. The IJN also had an equivalent number of aircraft with well-trained crews. Finally, the IJN had built every ton allowed it for aircraft carriers, giving it a near-

equivalence to the U.S. Navy, whose civilian leaders dragged their feet in funding aircraft carriers (or any other ships) between 1922 and 1933.⁶

The Japanese naval leadership of the interwar period consisted of “treaty” and “fleet” factions that were often at loggerheads with each other. Admiral Kato Kanji, a bitter opponent of the treaty system, became the de facto head of the fleet faction, the bulk of whose officers rotated between fleet assignments and jobs on the Imperial Japanese Navy General Staff (IJNGS). These officers tended to control training and doctrine through the dual mechanism of fleet billets and the IJNGS. They addressed their perceived humiliation to the U.S. Navy by focusing on relentless training in all areas, including night surface combat doctrine and naval aviation.⁷ This training advantage later paid high dividends in the opening year of the Pacific War, as seen during the Japanese attack on the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii (7 December 1941), the sinking of the British Royal Navy capital ships HMS *Prince of Wales* (53) and HMS *Repulse* (1916) (10 December 1941), and the campaign for Guadalcanal (7 August 1942–9 February 1943). The Guadalcanal campaign saw the IJN administer some of the U.S. Navy’s greatest tactical defeats in its history at Savo Island (8–9 August 1942) and Cape Tassafaronga (30 November 1942), as well as the deaths of two American admirals during the sanguinary first night of the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal (12–13 November 1942).⁸

By 1924, the Japanese naval leadership had a general idea of the U.S. Navy’s plans for a Pacific campaign as outlined in War Plan Orange.⁹ The fleet faction’s control of doctrine led to the IJN’s adoption of the so-called “decisive battle doctrine.” This doctrine envisaged the IJN whittling the U.S. Navy fleet’s numbers as it advanced westward across the Pacific toward the

Philippines using light forces such as aircraft carrier scouting groups, land-based aviation from its bases in the island Mandates (the Caroline, Marshall, and Mariana island groups), and large long-range submarines. The goal was to meet a depleted U.S. fleet somewhere in the Western Pacific, probably near the Mariana Islands, and defeat it in one great battleship-dominated engagement in the same manner that the Japanese had defeated the Russian fleet in the Battle of Tsushima in 1905 during the Russo-Japanese War. Mission accomplished; war won.¹⁰

Reality intruded on the idea of “decisive battle,” but it never went away in the minds of Japan’s leading admirals (or generals). The first jolts to this idea came with Japan’s invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and its high-intensity war with China beginning in 1937. Many scholars now date the beginning of World War II in 1937 in China; some date it even earlier. From 1932 on, the IJN fleet, especially its aircraft carriers, was almost in constant operation providing presence and power projection to operations in China.¹¹ At the same time, to maintain its edge, the IJN carrier training program became the most rigorous in the world, and its design of long-range carrier aircraft emphasized range over self-protection. The pilots would be so good, and the aircraft so maneuverable, that few enemies would get a bead on them to shoot them down. The downside to this training program was that it only slowly generated replacements. In a perverse dynamic, the veteran naval pilots of the wars in China, because of their combat experience, became even more difficult to replace as time went on.¹²

This all fit into the concept of the one big decisive battle envisioned—indeed, demanded—by the doctrine. Doctrine had become dogma. In broad

systemic terms, Japan's naval leaders designed a fleet for a short decisive naval war on the Russo-Japanese War model. Technology also played a role in the confidence of the Japanese naval leaders, as shown with the IJN's aircraft design. Other effective weapons that would underwrite a quick decisive victory for Japan included the IJN's magnificent 18-inch-gun *Yamato*-class super battleships and its Type 93 "long lance" torpedoes. In all areas, the Japanese would outrange their American opponents. During the Pacific War, the Type 93 torpedo delivered, but only at the tactical level when wielded by highly trained veterans whose replacements came slowly, if at all. The super battleship idea did not pan out at all, with one of the *Yamato*-class battleships being converted to an aircraft carrier after its keel was laid. This carrier, *Shinano*, was sunk by a U.S. submarine during its shakedown cruise in 1944.¹³

The IJN became a fleet that could deliver spectacular results, as witnessed between December 1941 and May 1942, but it was not a fleet that could fight an attritional war. It was too fragile, too irreplaceable. This was known and articulated by the commander in chief of the IJN's Combined Fleet, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, to Japanese prime minister Prince Fumimaro Konoye in 1940: "If we are ordered to do it [go to war with the United States], then I can guarantee to put up a tough fight for the first six months, but I have absolutely no confidence as to what would happen if it went on for two or three years."¹⁴ Japan's naval leaders, including those of the fleet faction that dominated the IJN, knew as well that they did not have the material means for an attritional war with the United States, but they lied to the Imperial Japanese Army leaders that they did in April 1941. These

lies further emboldened Prime Minister Hideki Tojo and the Japanese leadership to decide for war later that summer.¹⁵

All of these factors combined to make the IJN a very fragile force if it found itself in an extended conflict with the foremost industrial power on the globe—the United States. This fragility consisted of focusing on highly trained elites to win a short war with the United States and, as it turned out, Great Britain. The calculation that Japan's ally Germany would tie down the portion of the British Royal Navy not defeated in the opening days of the Pacific War proved to be correct in the short term, but Japanese leaders willingly fooled themselves with respect to the United States. Finally, decisive battle doctrine foreclosed the IJN's options if the United States decided on a long war of attrition. The irony of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 is that it led to just that: a grim determination by the United States to fight Japan using all the weapons of war, including strategic bombing and unrestricted submarine operations, in a methodical series of island-hopping campaigns. By the end of 1942, Japan's fragile fleet was battered, its air arm was decimated, and many of its veteran carrier pilots and aircraft carrier deck crews were dead. By 1943, a resurgent U.S. Navy submarine fleet made the training of Japanese replacement pilots even more difficult as it sank the bulk of Japan's tanker fleet that moved oil and refined aviation gasoline from the conquered refineries and oil fields in the East Indies to training grounds in the home islands of Japan. Before too long, a Japanese replacement pilot's first combat mission, at least in the Pacific, became their last. Similarly, Japan's veteran surface ships also found themselves whittled down until all the IJN had left was a depleted surface force of battleships, cruisers, destroyers, and empty aircraft carriers for one

last *Götterdämmerung* (twilight of the gods) at Leyte Gulf in the Philippines in October 1944.¹⁶

Insights for the U.S. Navy of Today

The U.S. Navy of today reflects some similarities to the IJN of yesteryear, especially in its fragility and its commitment to a form of decisive battle doctrine. However, there are several caveats. The first of these is that the U.S. Navy is smaller than its Japanese predecessor. True, the U.S. Navy warships of today, which on any given day number between 250 and 290, have many more capabilities than their World War II predecessors.¹⁷ When those differences are “normalized” against the size of the PLAN, Chinese naval militias, and the Chinese Coast Guard, however, they reflect an unfavorable balance of force to the U.S. Navy’s debit.¹⁸ It must also be understood that in a war between the United States and the China in the Indo-Pacific, the PLAN will be fighting in its own backyard, close to its logistics support facilities and industrial and repair base. Prior to the outbreak of World War II in the Pacific, the United States had passed the Naval Expansion Act of 1940 and was building a fleet several times the size of the IJN, due for delivery in 1943.¹⁹ The United States no longer has the industrial capacity, the skilled available workforce, and certainly not the political will, at the moment, to match that feat. Furthermore, the ability of the U.S. Navy to replace shipping once lost is comparable to that of the IJN in the Pacific War, as the infrastructure and capacity of U.S. shipyards today is nowhere near what it was in 1941.²⁰

The second caveat has to do with readiness: the U.S. Navy is less ready and less well-trained than its IJN predecessor. This is the result of the

lack of honest self-assessment, both individually and collectively, referenced by Admiral Gilday.²¹ Anyone following the news of the last few years could not help but agree: witness the collisions involving the destroyers USS *John S. McCain* (DDG 56) and USS *Fitzgerald* (DDG 62) in 2017; the catastrophic damage control response to the fire aboard the amphibious assault ship USS *Bonhomme Richard* (LHD 6) in 2020; and naval aviation aircraft availability rates, which are at historic lows in both the Navy and the U.S. Air Force.²² The Navy did try to address the systemic problems that led to these disasters; however, the recent near-collision between the destroyer USS *Momsen* (DDG 92) and the dock landing ship USS *Harpers Ferry* (LSD 49) in November 2022 belies the narrative that much has been done to fix things.²³ The tracking process for post-2017 accidents has been gradually downgraded from flag- to O-5-level supervision in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations.²⁴

Another caveat has to do with the U.S. Navy's mission set. Prior to the outbreak of World War II in the Pacific, the IJN had a broad mission set, but when "go time" came in 1941, its mission set was clear and defined: defeat the U.S. Navy in decisive battle, to the exclusion of all other priorities. The U.S. Navy today has no such luxury, despite the declining size of its fleet. The requirement for presence and the "equality" of the U.S. combatant commanders worldwide has led to a global mission set that has spread the fleet thin as well as far and wide. When the gapping of a carrier presence is reported for the Persian Gulf in histrionic terms (as has recently occurred), it highlights this dynamic. The United States does not possess a two-ocean fleet, as it did in World War II, with another one on the way. It really only has one fleet for one region, the Indo-Pacific, and a small one at that considering

the size of the region and the threats apparent there. Nonetheless, the United States has let its combatant commanders continue in their relentless demands to provide the “presence” that has helped cripple the readiness of the fleet.²⁵

Finally, the U.S. Navy has adopted a form of modern decisive battle doctrine—hoping to win a maritime war in its opening phases—rather than recognizing that attrition with a major industrial power such as China is more likely in the future. This future will also include attacks in the cyber domain, the alternate to war, which lends itself well to attacking deep into systems to further degrade readiness. Those who argue that conflict is unlikely do not seem to understand the dynamics of deterrence, which requires a well-trained and ready fleet that is not just for the opening night—the “fight tonight,” as advocated by some naval leaders—but for the long duration that is more likely to ensue.²⁶ Retired U.S. Navy captain Robert C. Rubel, former dean of the Center for Naval Warfare Studies at the U.S. Naval War College, recently stated that “if deterrence is based on the assumption of a quick, decisive victory, it is precarious, especially if the government we seek to deter perceives that we are limited by that assumption. A useful theory of victory must thus extend beyond the repulse of an enemy’s initial thrust.”²⁷ An assumption of quick victory was precisely the mistake that the IJN made at the outset of World War II in the Pacific.

Quo Vadis?

In summary, the U.S. Navy may have already turned into the IJN—but instead of being its 1932 or 1941 incarnations, characterized by neglect, dishonesty, and an endless forward presence to support land wars in Asia, it

looks more like the IJN of late 1943 or 1944, battered not by war but by an operational tempo that is driven by presence requirements, poor administration and leadership, and neglect. Unfortunately for the U.S. Navy, and for the United States at large, this realization is coming not in 2010, when more could have been done about it, but in 2023 with war in Europe following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and strained tensions in Asia over Taiwan and China's "nine-dash line" in the South China Sea that claims maritime sovereignty in contravention of international law. A prescient CNO briefing from 2010, authored in part by a leading American strategist, retired U.S. Navy captain Peter M. Swartz, predicted a "tipping point" with the "shrinking status quo option" being the worst. That was the option adopted, more through neglect than by deliberate decision.²⁸

Today's crises in Ukraine and the South China Sea have maritime components, the latter being more heavily maritime in its implications and demands. However, it is perhaps the war in Ukraine that offers the more sobering insights about what happens when a collective leadership lies to itself while others take the approach of "not my problem to solve." Certainly Russian president Vladimir Putin and possibly his generals and admirals believed in the veracity of their understanding of the reality of the capability of Russia's military forces, the political situation both inside and outside Ukraine, and the weakness of their opponent. Their surprise was surely a nasty one when the fog of war lifted enough to reveal the reality of their shaky assumptions and beliefs. The iconic image of the sinking cruiser RTS *Moskva* (121), flagship of the Russian Navy's Black Sea Fleet, in April 2022 serves as a sobering reminder of this.²⁹

The U.S. Navy's collective leadership should receive some credit for its recognition that it has problems and its attempts to solve these problems with a continuous process improvement program. Reducing deferred major ship maintenance from 7,000 days to "fewer than" 3,000 is progress of a sort. But crowing about what amounts to still being in a maintenance hole as some sort of milestone achievement obscures the fundamental problem.³⁰ These fixes have resulted in little that corrects the systemic problems of the Navy, and throwing more money into the current system will not correct them. In fact, the most recent Board of Inspection and Survey report stated: "Overall Fleet material condition showed a slight decline in FY 2022, resuming a slight but steady negative trend evident since FY 2017."³¹ So much for progress. Despite the Navy's efforts at trying to get at parts of its fragility, the mistakes of the last 30-plus years cannot be undone overnight, and not in the term of a single CNO.³²

Accordingly, this author offers some recommendations for how to begin to correct these deep-seated problems. The Navy first needs a cultural change before other moves such as acquisition reform will make taxpayers' money go further in building and putting to sea the most effective fleet possible in the next generation. In the past, cultural change for the Navy came most effectively from the top—from its flag officers, especially the CNO. As mentioned above, one CNO cannot do this alone, but perhaps replicating the past by promoting a more junior admiral to the post of CNO, as was done with Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr. in 1970, should be seriously explored.³³

One of the things that Zumwalt and his cabal of reformers did well was to first look closely at the Navy's maritime strategy and then issue clear

guidance, publicly, about their priorities for how the fleet would support the strategy—from Project Sixty under Zumwalt; to Sea Plan 2000 under his successor as CNO, Admiral James L. Holloway III; to the mature Maritime Strategy of the 1980s.³⁴ Having a coherent strategy has always been a precursor and partner to dynamic leadership in getting a better maritime force. If the Navy truly recognizes that it has a problem, it has to sound the clarion call as these leaders from an earlier era did, offer solutions, and avoid pointing to marginal progress as proof that everything is smooth sailing.

There is currently a maritime competitor on the high seas as embodied by the PLAN, the Chinese Coast Guard, and Chinese naval militias; but last this author checked open warfare is not something the U.S. Navy is engaged in with any other nation. Easing the Navy's operational tempo and ridding it of "nice to have" presence missions, at least temporarily, can easily be implemented and enforced by the secretary of defense and the president if they so choose. These officials can restrain the combatant commanders and provide the Navy with the downtime it needs to catch up on its maintenance days and to reverse the declining morale within the fleet. The Navy's aviation community performs these kinds of "safety standdowns" all the time, but instead of doing so for a day, or even a week, this one could last months, and extra time could be built into train-up cycles to ensure that ships and crews are up to snuff and not deployed before they are in the correct state of readiness.

It is time to quit squandering the present peace at sea, which in turn could undermine the peace and lead to disaster in war. The United States is not the Japan that was backed into a corner with a fuel embargo in 1941.

But it does have an unready, fragile fleet whose leaders have been lying to themselves for at least two decades. It is time to wake up before U.S. leaders have a “Putin moment” of their own. The United States of the twenty-first century is no longer a “sleeping giant.”³⁵

¹ Walt Kelly, *Pogo*, 22 April 1971, Pogo Collection, Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum, Ohio State University.

² Sam LaGrone and Mallory Shelbourne, “CNO Blames Culture of Poor Self-Assessment for Major Navy Problems,” *USNI News*, 11 January 2022.

³ Megan Eckstein and Diana Stancy Correll, “Navy Should Be ‘Offended’ by Its Own Maintenance and Manning Faults, Admiral Says,” *Defense News*, 12 January 2020.

⁴ Sadao Asada, “The Revolt against the Washington Treaty,” *Naval War College Review* 46, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 88–89.

⁵ The text of the MacArthur-Pratt agreement can be found in Peter M. Swartz, *The Homeland Defense Role of the U.S. Navy*, CNA Historical Paper Series (Arlington, VA: CNA, 2021), 53. Gen Douglas MacArthur and Adm William V. Pratt were the Service chiefs, respectively, for the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy.

⁶ John T. Kuehn, *Agents of Innovation: The General Board and the Design of the Fleet that Defeated the Japanese Navy* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2008), 25–29, 53–58; and Thomas Heinrich, *Warship Builders: An Industrial History of U.S. Naval Shipbuilding, 1922–1945* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2020), 11.

⁷ Asada, “The Revolt against the Washington Treaty,” 87, 91, 93–94; and Alessio Patalano, “Feigning Grand Strategy: Japan, 1937–1941,” in *The Cambridge History of the Second World War*, vol. 1, *Fighting the War*, eds. John Ferris and Evan Mawdsley (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 173–74, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHO9781139855969.009>.

⁸ Richard B. Frank, *Tower of Skulls: A History of the Asia-Pacific War, July 1937–May 1942* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2020), 351–55; Toshikazu Omhae, ed. Roger Pineau, “The Battle of Savo Island,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 83, no. 12 (December 1957); Raizo Tanaka, ed. Roger Pineau, “Japan’s Losing Struggle for Guadalcanal, Part I,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 82, no. 7 (July 1956); and Raizo Tanaka, ed. Roger Pineau, “Japan’s Losing Struggle for Guadalcanal, Part II,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 82, no. 8 (August 1956).

⁹ David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics, and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887–1941* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 472.

¹⁰ Evans and Peattie, *Kaigun*, 129, 132, 282, 300.

¹¹ Frank, *Tower of Skulls*, 11–18; and Mark R. Peattie, *Sunburst: The Rise of Japanese Naval Air Power, 1909–1941* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 50–51, 102–122. See also Richard Overy, *Blood and Ruins: The Last Imperial War, 1931–1945* (London: Viking, 2021).

¹² Peattie, *Sunburst*, 174.

¹³ Evans and Peattie, *Kaigun*, 502, 590.

¹⁴ John T. Kuehn and D. M. Giangreco, *Eyewitness Pacific Theater: Firsthand Accounts of the War in the Pacific from Pearl Harbor to the Atomic Bombs* (New York: Sterling, 2008), 26–27.

¹⁵ Patalano, “Feigning Grand Strategy,” 174.

¹⁶ *U.S. Navy at War, 1941–1945: Official Reports to the Secretary of the Navy by Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, U.S. Navy, Commander in Chief, United States Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations* (Washington, DC: Navy Department, 1946), 20–02; Peattie, *Sunburst*, 183–86; and Kevin J. Delamer, “Syracuse in the Pacific?,” in *The Battle of Leyte Gulf at 75: A Retrospective*, ed. Thomas J. Cutler (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2019), 148–159.

¹⁷ “Active Ships in the U.S. Navy,” Military.com, 23 June 2021. This article lists 251 “active ships in commission” versus 296 “battle-force ships.” The latter number includes combat logistics force ships, many of which are in the Military Sealift Command and piloted by civilian mariners.

¹⁸ Mallory Shelbourne, “China Has World’s Largest Navy with 355 Ships and Counting, Says Pentagon,” *USNI News*, 3 November 2021.

¹⁹ Robert W. Love Jr., *History of the U.S. Navy*, vol. 1, 1775–1941 (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1992), 622–23.

²⁰ Heinrich, *Warship Builders*, 86–91.

²¹ LaGrone and Shelbourne, “CNO Blames Culture of Poor Self-Assessment for Major Navy Problems”; and Eckstein and Stacy Correll, “Navy Should Be ‘Offended’ by Its Own Maintenance and Manning Faults.”

²² Barbara Starr, Jamie Crawford, and Brad Lendon, “U.S. Navy: Two Deadly Summer Collisions Were ‘Unavoidable,’” *CNN Politics*, 2 November 2017; “Navy Releases Extensive *Bonhomme Richard* Fire Report, Major Fires Review,” U.S. Navy Press Office, 20 October 2021; and Stephen Losey, “Here’s How Bad the Military’s Aircraft Readiness Has Gotten,” *Air Force Times*, 19 November 2020.

²³ *Preliminary Inquiry into the Near-Miss Collision between USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49) and USS Momsen (DDG 92)* (San Diego, CA: Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, 2023). This report clearly identifies the same sorts of issues present, and how preventable they were, as found in the investigations into the earlier accidents.

²⁴ Steve Wills, email to author, 24 April 2023. Wills, a retired U.S. Navy officer, worked for many years for the Center for Naval Analysis but now works for the Navy League of the United States’ Center for Maritime Strategy.

²⁵ Sam LaGrone, “Essex Amphibious Ready Group Leaves 5th Fleet; No U.S. Capital Ship in Middle East,” *USNI News*, 10 January 2022; and Robert O. Work, “A Slavish Devotion to Forward Presence Has Nearly Broken the U.S. Navy,” in U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 147, no. 12 (December 2021).

²⁶ “This Is What We Live For: Admiral Harry Harris Takes Command of U.S. Pacific Forces,” *South China Morning Post*, 28 May 2015; and “U.S. Navy Kicks off Large-Scale Exercise 2021,” Navy.mil, 3 August 2021.

²⁷ Robert C. Rubel, “A New Maritime Strategy, Part 2: A Theory of Victory?,” Center for International Maritime Security, 19 October 2021.

²⁸ Daniel Whiteneck et al., *The Navy at a Tipping Point: Maritime Dominance at Stake?* (Arlington, VA: CNA, 2010), 3.

²⁹ Andrew Goodman, “Putin the Planner,” *War on the Rocks*, 26 April 2022.

³⁰ Megan Eckstein, “How the U.S. Navy Prioritized Readiness, and Got More Ships Too,” *Defense News*, 10 April 2023.

³¹ *Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) Annual Report* (Washington, DC: Navy Department, 2023), 2.

³² Steve Wills, "End the Navy's 30-Year Slide in Capability and Capacity," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 149, no. 4 (April 2023).

³³ For a discussion of cultural change and leadership in the U.S. Navy, see John T. Kuehn, "Zumwalt, Holloway, and the Soviet Navy Threat: Leadership in a Time of Strategic, Social, and Cultural Change," *Journal of Advanced Military Studies* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2022): 19–32, <https://doi.org/10.21140/mcuj.20221302001>.

³⁴ Kuehn, "Zumwalt, Holloway, and the Soviet Navy Threat," 21–23, 28.

³⁵ This refers to IJN admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's apocryphal statement that Japan may have "awoken a sleeping giant" after the 7 December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, HI.