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Author: Mengmeng Wu

University of Melbourne, Australia

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TOWARD INTEGRATION: THE NEW CHANGE IN THE U.S. MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY

Mengmeng Wu
University of Melbourne
Australia

ABSTRACT

In recent years, the U.S. has pursued a maritime security strategy centred on the “Reassertion of Maritime Dominance.” On December 17, 2020, the American Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard jointly released “Advantage at Sea: Prevailing with Integrated All-Domain Naval Power”. This paper focuses on the centralised integration characteristics in this strategic report, and examines the following questions: What is the integration strategy? Where does the integration strategy come from? How will the integration strategy impact actors in the international community? This paper states that, the integration strategy, as a multidimensional strategy across U.S. institutions and alliances, seeks to counter competitors. This strategy’s core themes can be perceived in the integration of national competencies and international actors. The paper observes the origins of this integration strategy, seizing key driving factors such as historical continuity, strategic necessity, the insignificance of military superiority, shifts in international order, technological advancement, and emerging threats. Challenges to the implementation of this strategy lie in domestic political and economic constraints and conflicting interests with allies. Finally, this paper assesses the implications of this integration strategy for rival states, allied networks, and the broader international order. Overall, this paper fills the academic gap in the field of the integration feature of U.S. maritime

security strategy, inspiring further research on American grand strategy and great power rivalry.

Keywords: Integration Strategy, U.S. Maritime Security Strategy, Great Power Rivalry

INTRODUCTION

After the Cold War, the U.S. focused its maritime security strategy on projecting forces from the sea to land, given its overwhelming maritime military superiority. This strategy emphasises littoral and land-based support operations. While in more recent years, American maritime strategy has had a trend of “Reassertion of Maritime Dominance” in the context of great power rivalry and erosion of U.S. relative advantage (U.S. Navy, 2017a; U.S. Navy, 2017b; The White House, 2022). The most notable document in this trend is titled Advantage at Sea: Prevailing with Integrated All-Domain Naval Power (U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, & Coast Guard, 2020).

This paper argues that this strategic report signalled a significant pivot toward integration. This new trajectory of U.S. maritime security has a feature of deep integration of various maritime forces, all-domain operational competencies, and contributions from allies and partners. Based on text analysis and structural framework, this paper begins with key assumptions and research approaches. Secondly, this paper explains the contents

of maritime integration, including the features, logics, and multiple dimensions for integration. Thirdly, this paper examines the internal and external origins of the American shift to integration. Fourthly, this paper discusses the existing challenges when America implements the integrated maritime strategy from domestic and international perspectives. Finally, the paper explores the implications of the integration strategy on other actors in the international community.

KEY CONCEPTS AND RESEARCH APPROACHES

This paper firstly explains the key concepts of the ‘American maritime security strategy’ and ‘integration’. According to the American official report, the maritime security strategy is using “integrated all-domain naval power to defend our homeland, safeguard sea lines of communication, deter aggression, and uphold the rules-based international order” (U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, & Coast Guard, 2020). This definition is different from the traditional, narrower one, which belongs to the same category as the near-shore defense strategy and naval special operations strategy. The new definition can be applied in a broader scope, which integrates broader multi-level and multi-field comprehensive frameworks beyond the military attributes. It contains the strategic conception, military perspective, vis-à-vis the diplomatic dimension, such as strengthening relations with allies.

The concept of integration originated in the field of engineering. It initially refers to a technological trend combining multiple functions or devices together (Wang, Ma, Yang, Gong, & Wang, 2023; Kossar, 2024). This concept was gradually extended to the disciplines of medicine, education, and sociology, such as the development of the concept of Integrated Management System (Olaru,

Maier, Nicoara, & Maier, 2014). In the document, Advantage at Sea, the U.S. initially put forward the concept of integration and mentioned it repeatedly as a strategic focus. It refers to compressing the relevant information and elements related to the construction of the U.S. maritime force as much as possible within a given time and space. This concept aims at the integration of dispersed forces in cost, efficiency, and space, to win the great power competition throughout the whole process.

This paper applies the textual and structural analysis. Specifically, this paper primarily refers to the U.S. strategic report, Advantage at Sea: Prevailing with Integrated All-Domain Naval Power, vis-à-vis some other official documents, reports, and statements. Accordingly, this paper preliminarily outlines the analytical structure for the contents of ‘integration’, including three key components: thematic features, operational logics, and the multi-level dimensions. Combining structural and process-oriented analytical methods, this paper constructs a synthetic analytical framework for the integration strategy, including four sections: the detailed contents, the origins behind, the existing challenges, and the global impacts.

Contents

This paper examines the contents of the integration strategy from the perspectives of features, internal logics, and integrated dimensions. According to the Advantage at Sea, the most obvious feature of this strategy is its focus on integration, which is the strategic centrepiece of the American maritime security vision. This strategy articulates not only the integration of the U.S. military’s naval, land, and air forces, but also the development of integrated capabilities with allied maritime forces. Simultaneously, this strategy continues the interventionist thinking, which

originated amid intensifying domestic tension and an increasingly complex international landscape. The interventionism has since been promoted by elites to the broader public, gradually shifting U.S. foreign policy from traditional complete isolationism toward hegemonic interventionism. Within this integration strategy, such interventionism is particularly evident in the U.S. arrangements for the integration of allied naval forces.

The internal logic of the integration strategy reflects both the necessity of its proposal and the feasibility of its implementation. In terms of the structure, this maritime security strategy document begins by analysing the current operational environment and challenges confronting American security. It then introduces the concept and applications of an integrated all-domain maritime force as a pathway to address these challenges. Finally, it provides strategic guidance for the modernisation and development of integrated maritime forces. This structure reflects the strategic imperative arising from the evolving geopolitical environment. From the perspective of implementation, the construction of the integrated and all-domain maritime force offers a viable path for reversing the relative erosion of American military advantage, ensuring the sustained development of maritime power, and advancing national strategic objectives. The integrated all-domain force, including the Coast Guard, Navy and Marine Corps, is suited to the entire spectrum of operations of competition, cooperation, and conflict. Such a joint maritime force offers national leadership a broader array of strategic options and enhances American deterrence and crisis response capabilities globally.

The integration strategy comprises multiple dimensions, varying on the internal and external sides. Domestically, the integration strategy encompasses multi-level forces, mechanisms, vis-à-vis

intelligence and information networks. Abroad, this strategy refers to the integration with nation-states and non-governmental organisations in the American alliance system.

Domestic multi-level forces

Committed to integrating forces, the strategy focuses on different groups within the U.S. involved in maritime security, including the various military services and military assets, governments and departments at all levels, and civilian forces. At the core of integrated forces is the full-spectrum naval force composed of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. This joint force has the features of operational autonomy and scalability. The Coast Guard contributes to maritime transportation security. The Marine Corps integrates sea and land operational forces, and the Navy provides a strategic power for maritime crisis response. Such joint military forces recruit, train, and manage various personnel prepared to operate in dynamic environments, ensuring readiness, logistical continuity, and rapid reinforcement capabilities. Their objectives are to deny malign activities, operate effectively under surveillance, and employ resilient integrated networks to execute long-range precision strikes, while maintaining nuclear deterrence. Training in dynamic environments and expanding operational competencies is central to this hybrid fleet. A comprehensive integration includes distributed training and professional military education, performance enhancement, network development, strategic planning, simulation, innovative analyses, joint exercise, industrial investment, technological upgrades, and military force design. Civil maritime bodies, such as merchant vessels, crews, port infrastructure, and shipyards, are also incorporated. These multi-level forces shape a cohesive domestic architecture of maritime security.

Domestic Mechanisms

The integration strategy outlines a general operational mechanism in the context of great power rivalry. This mechanism requires the Coast Guard to provide unique law enforcement functions, fishery protection, and maritime safety/security operations. These functions are combined with naval and Marine Corps operations to establish a generalized process integration mechanism that incorporates sea control, sea denial, maritime and land-based firepower. Meanwhile, the operation of this mechanism must adapt to varying intensities, regions, and domains in the context of different scenarios, such as peacetime competition, crisis, and conflict. In peacetime competition, the U.S. should utilise the integration strategy to create long-term advantages for its foreign policy, economy, and technology. In the crisis, the global mobility and continuous forward movement of U.S. maritime forces make the Navy a front-line presence at the scene. In the conflict, the American naval forces should coordinate with allies, aiming to terminate hostilities while maintaining strategic deterrence against the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Taking the South China Sea issue as an example, since the release of the Integrated Maritime Security Strategy, the U.S. Coast Guard has been engaged in the South China Sea situation through patrols, joint naval and air force exercises, and the signing of law enforcement cooperation agreements. In early 2021, America deployed its two most advanced patrol ships to the Guam base and carried out civil action exercises and cooperation in the South China Sea with integrated forces in surrounding areas and merchant ships (Craymer & Kesling, 2021). These actions reflect American calculations about maintaining its primary maritime status in the Indo-Pacific region.

Domestic intelligence and information networks

The strategic report also requires a high-degree integration of the U.S. Navy's information environment, cyber domain, and electromagnetic spectrum. In all-process competition, expanding information and decision-making advantages is a universal integration strategy. This required maintaining a certain advantage in information coordination, distribution, and mobility to more quickly perceive and decide on military actions. In the crisis, the U.S. tends to continue its strategy for naval information construction in the early 21st Century, focusing on network-centric theory, vigorously developing information infrastructure, and using information technology to transform major military equipment. In the integration strategy, this constructive strategy is reflected specifically as: fully understand the strategic operating environment by delicate system technology, ward competitors' military equipment by manned and unmanned ISR platforms, collect information intelligence by submarines, surface ships, aircraft, unmanned systems and other military equipment in naval joint forces, vis-à-vis form a unified and integrated operation picture. Furthermore, naval special operations forces are being utilised to gather civil and military information to guard against potential adversaries' attempts to undermine the fragile maritime governance environment during crises.

External alliances

The integration of alliances within the integration strategy primarily refers to military forces, civilian resources, partial sovereignty concessions, and economic support in the context of different competitions. America is strengthening and expanding its networks with alliances, such as NATO, which provide maritime forces and strategic sea bases.

This aims at preventing sabotage by rival nations and ensuring its success in the full spectrum of competition. The U.S. is also integrating the operational capabilities of its alliance system through various agreements and organisations. During daily competition, to maintain a flexible network of alliances and partnerships to foster a free and open order and structure, the U.S. continuously builds mutual trust with its alliance system through various joint exercises and operations, theatre security cooperation, participation in global health management, and foreign defence and capacity building efforts. In crises, the power of the alliance system can serve as a force multiplier during competition. The involvement of allies and partners in crisis situations not only enhances the legitimacy and deterrence of US actions but also, to a certain extent, reflects the shared goals and positions of allies. In conflicts, the alliance system can provide the U.S. with integrated combat power and legitimacy. Leveraging the American interoperable C2 network, allies and partners can help establish maritime control and provide all-domain firepower.

Take the development of the U.S. in the Indo-Pacific region as an example (VOA Chinese, 2024). On May 3, 2024, U.S. Secretary of State Blinken said in a conversation with Republican Senator Mitt Romney at the Sedona Forum that the U.S. alone cannot compete with its competitor, China, in the Pacific region. However, when the U.S. joins forces with its allies, such as Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan and India, the competition situation will be very different. In the meeting between U.S. President Biden and Australian Prime Minister Albanese in 2023, they plan to invest in the construction of maritime infrastructure in the South Pacific region and lay Google's submarine high-speed cable to become an alternative option to China's promises. Such integration allows the U.S. to strategically engage in Indo-

Pacific affairs by integrating the power of the alliance system.

Origins

The US government's move toward an integrated maritime security strategy is primarily driven by multiple domestic and international factors. Internally, the historical continuity of US maritime power development and the current realities of development are prerequisites for the integrated adjustment of its maritime security strategy. Numerous values serve as a guiding ideological foundation for this integrated strategic adjustment. Furthermore, the relative weakening of US military power and the gradual decline of its relative advantages amidst the economic downturn necessitate a readjustment of its maritime security strategy. Externally, the struggle for power among various actors in the evolving international order and landscape, technological advancements, and the dual threats posed by both state and non-state actors are all key factors driving this integrated strategic adjustment. It's important to note that the analysis of internal and external driving factors here is intertwined. For example, changes in the international order and the growing economic and military advantages of state actors like China and Russia are two external driving factors that are contributing to the weakening of the U.S.' internal relative military advantage. These three factors, in turn, are driving the US government's design and implementation of a new integrated maritime security strategy.

Historical Continuity and Current Needs

The U.S. Navy has a long history of development, particularly during World War II, when the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, part of the U.S. Joint Maritime Forces, played a significant role. These various naval services, joint forces, and reserve industrial bases enabled the U.S. to achieve significant

advantages in both the maritime and air domains during the war. During the Cold War, while the U.S. pursued a "sea-to-land" strategy due to its relative advantage in the maritime domain, it remained committed to developing its maritime forces and maintaining its relative naval superiority. In recent years, the U.S., in light of the evolving international order and landscape, has become more aware of the importance of regaining sea control and has continuously increased its emphasis on developing its maritime capabilities. Therefore, the adjustment and release of the Integrated Maritime Security Strategy is, in essence, a historical continuation of the development of U.S. maritime power and maritime security strategy. Furthermore, this strategy also meets the current practical needs of the U.S. to enhance its maritime capabilities and relative advantages.

Values-Driven

According to the strategy report, the US government states that the ocean, as the connection between 90% of global trade markets and society, provides essential resources for the U.S. This includes \$540 billion in commercial activity, 31 million jobs, 95% of international communications via submarine cables, and \$10 trillion in financial transactions. Therefore, the US government believes that the ocean plays a vital role in national security and prosperity. This maritime value has played a significant driving role in the U.S.'s transition towards the integration strategy. Meanwhile, in the integration strategy report, the US repeatedly emphasises the role of maritime power development in supporting US security and prosperity and upholding its values, emphasising that US national security depends on its ability to maintain a relative advantage in the maritime domain. This value-based approach to maritime power development has driven

the government's continuous adjustments to its policies and guidelines regarding maritime power and naval development. Additionally, the U.S. still holds a zero-sum game value in the current great power competition. Specifically, it is manifested in the maintenance of its hegemonic position in the maritime field and various types of military cooperation with its allies. Furthermore, the US government's integrated adjustment of its maritime security strategy also reflects its partial influence on the ecological niche value, that is, "hegemonic countries prefer to engage in co-position competition with sea power as the core, but they do not reject the possible option of misaligned competition" (Chen, 2023). This means that while the U.S. prefers to use the joint maritime combat forces of its allies, it still hopes to use comparative competitive advantages to form an asymmetric military advantage.

The relative weakness of its own military capabilities

Affected by the economic downturn, the development of the domestic industrial industry in the U.S. has continued to decline. According to the US defence industry assessment report in September 2018, there is a shrinking feature in the American technological innovation ecosystem. The lack and shrinkage of strong innovation capabilities make it difficult for the U.S. to maintain its position as a global military hegemon (The White House, 2017). At the same time, against the background of the wave of deindustrialisation, the manufacturing capabilities of the US military industry are constantly weakening. The bankruptcy of enterprises and the loss of jobs are unable to provide sufficient power for many military manufacturing industries, including the shipbuilding industry base. In addition, the increasingly complex weapon systems and the shrinking defence industrial base

have increased the price of newly purchased weapons and increased the time cost of new weapon production and development. The government's continued budget pressure against the background of the new coronavirus pneumonia epidemic has a restrictive impact on the available defence resources. Furthermore, the U.S. maritime forces' inherent combat capabilities have also declined. For example, the decline of the U.S. shipbuilding industry has led to the retirement of older ships and insufficient upgrades. This has resulted in the current U.S. Navy's fleet shrinking in size and its combat capabilities lagging behind other great powers.

Changing International Order

The international order and global security environment are constantly evolving. U.S. adversaries, including China and Russia, are continuously developing modern military technologies. This global power competition is intensifying. In addition to state actors like China and Russia, participants in this competition include non-state actors such as violent extremists and criminal organisations. Both sides are negatively impacting the US Navy's ability to maintain its maritime superiority and protect future national interests.

Technological Development

In today's global maritime competition, technological development is continuously driving the development and innovation of military technology and maritime power thinking. While increasing the factors contributing to maritime security development, it is also expanding the dimensions of maritime competition, further complicating the maritime security environment for major powers. New converged technologies are dramatically impacting the US maritime security landscape, including artificial intelligence, autonomous driving,

additive manufacturing, quantum computing, new communication technologies, and new energy technologies. If these technologies are combined with other military forces or technologies involved in maritime security development, they could have unpredictable consequences for the global landscape and US maritime security development.

Threats from State Actors

Since the beginning of this century, U.S. naval forces have continuously monitored the growth of adversaries' naval power. Through interactions with Chinese and Russian aircraft, the U.S. Navy has witnessed the maturity of both countries' military capabilities. The U.S. believes that China and Russia are leveraging their formidable military might to support their revisionist activities. Specifically, the U.S. prioritises competition with China, believing that China is showing an intention to dominate maritime areas and regional waters. Jason Schermerhorn (2021), U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel, stated in his article "China's Growing Home Field Advantage: The U.S. Must Re-examine Its Confrontational Approach" that in the past 25 years, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China has achieved significant modernisation. Therefore, the U.S. government needs to prioritise the long-term strategic "threat" posed by the growth of China's economic and military power to the U.S. American administration believes that China's maritime military power is currently characterised by regional hegemony, leveraging the Belt and Road Initiative to expand its overseas logistics and infrastructure. As for Russia, the US government believes its recent maritime

actions have not only undermined the international order but also demonstrated opportunism and violations of international agreements and laws. America believes that Russia could launch cyberattacks or submarine cable attacks against US and European capitals, or even resort to nuclear weapons in combat to avoid defeat. Based on such threat perception from adversaries, America thus requires a more advanced maritime security strategy as a response.

Threats from Non-State Actors

Since 9/11, U.S. naval forces have increasingly focused on threats from non-state actors, including al-Qaeda, jihadist terrorism, and non-ideological actors such as pirates and smugglers. Although the U.S. government has refocused its maritime security strategy on threats from nation-states amidst intensifying great power competition, this has not completely eliminated the focus of U.S. policymakers on threats from non-state actors. The report argues that, in addition to state actors, other competitors, such as violent extremist organisations and transnational criminal organisations, are threatening the U.S.' vested interests and hegemony in the maritime region through piracy, drug smuggling, human trafficking, and other illegal activities. Against this backdrop, the U.S. government believes it is necessary to adjust its integrated maritime security strategy.

Challenges

Although the integration strategy is on its process of implementation, its actual implementation has been limited due to various constraints. Internally, the domestic economic, political, and social environment continues to constrain the implementation of the integration strategy. Externally, differences in interests, values, or other conflicts between the US and other actors in the international community, have all

constrained the continued implementation of the integration strategy.

Constraints of the domestic economic environment

The U.S., nowadays, has experienced a sluggish economic recovery, persistently high unemployment, and a chronic trade deficit that is widening. US GDP growth in 2020 fell by 3.5% year-on-year, the largest decline since the 2008 financial crisis. The Biden Administration signed a series of budgetary resolutions to increase US government spending after coming to power in 2021, which accounts for 30% of US GDP. In such an economic environment, the implementation of the integration strategy lacks predictable budgets and timely funding.

Constraints of the Domestic Political Environment

On the one hand, the interest groups in the U.S. domestic political environment limit the implementation of the integration strategy. Interest groups, such as the Boeing Group, tend to invest more funds in the Air and Ground Forces, while maintaining a restraining attitude towards the US Navy's additional access to economic, material, and policy resources. Limited funds that are difficult to allocate reasonably create further obstacles to the development of joint military forces. On the other hand, the party division in the U.S. limits the long-term development and continuity of the integration strategy. The specific policy formulation and implementation, hence, are hard to maintain stability.

Constraints of the Domestic Social Environment

The US domestic social environment has undergone drastic shifts in social and political thought, some of which have constrained the implementation and development of an integrated maritime strategy. Since the Trump administration,

populist ideas have resurfaced within US society. Capitalising on the Mexican refugee crisis and rising unemployment among white people amidst the economic downturn, the Trump administration spreads "white supremacist" sentiments within domestic society, leading to a split within the society. Although the Biden administration has implemented policies back to traditional democratic values, the return of the Trump Administration continues the signs of class division and disunity. The integration strategy, in this context, is unlikely to gain public acceptance and implementation in such an unstable society.

Conflict with the Alliance's Interests

The American government's foreign integration efforts primarily include its allies and other non-governmental organisations, such as the International Maritime Organisation. However, the alliance's interests sometimes differ from the U.S.'s. Nation-states in the international society prioritise maximising their own power, and non-governmental organisations operate with shared interests among member states. However, the interventionism reflected in the American integration strategy threatens the maintenance of these actors' interests. For instance, the U.S. took the lead in establishing the AUKUS military alliance in September 2021. According to its specific implementation plan, Australia plans to purchase 8 nuclear submarines to obtain the transfer of relevant attack nuclear submarine technology from the U.S. and Britain. However, Paul Keating (2021), former Australian Prime Minister, criticised the AUKUS agreement for strengthening Australia's dependence on its allies. The strategic dislocation and interest-binding relationship caused by this agreement is seriously restricting Australia's own international communication capabilities and has caused a significant deviation from Australia's original autonomous

direction. The goal of the U.S. for AUKUS is to build the Pacific Fusion Centre into one of the fulcrums of its maritime situation awareness network and develop its intelligence analysis function. Australia, on the other hand, wants to use this alliance to achieve the improvement of its status in the Pacific and the development of regional integration institutions. The two sides have certain differences in interest setting and goal realisation. In addition, nuclear issues have also become a prominent domain of interest conflict between the U.S. and its allies (Wesley-Smith & Finin, 2021). The Pacific Island countries (PICs) have been deeply affected by the negative impact of nuclear tests by other major powers. PICs fully support the agreement principles of the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty and have raised objections to the nuclear submarine project in the AUKUS. They thus established the Blue Pacific 2050 Strategy in July 2022 to actively shape the strategic direction of regional maritime security governance.

Great Power Maritime Competition

In the international context of great power rivalry, the maritime security strategies of different actors may constrain the global implementation of the American integration strategy. Particularly in the Sino-US rivalry, the two sides have primarily competition in the fields of military technology research. China's rapid advancement in maritime technology and capabilities is not only a driving factor integration strategy, but also an obstacle for its future development. In August 2023, the spokesman for the Chinese Ministry of National Defence (2023) stated that, "the U.S. has clung to its erroneous perception of China and unreasonably contained and suppressed China." Hence, China maintains a relatively tough attitude towards America in the maritime military interactions and competition. Also,

considering China's certain achievements in modern military construction, it already has the competence to constitute a countermeasure to the US to some extent. This will become a challenge for America to promote the integration strategy globally to maintain its maritime hegemony.

Global Implications

The U.S., as a great power, will have a significant global influence through its change towards an integration maritime security strategy. It is important to note that these evident implications share a certain degree of interconnectedness and interaction. The impacts are not limited to the field of regional maritime but are also reflected in the all-domain process, including politics, economy, culture, and society.

Impact on competitors

The formulation and implementation of the integration strategy for rival countries is largely based on the US government's targeting of its rivals. Therefore, its adjustment of the maritime strategy will have a great impact on rival countries. First, the U.S. will shape the threat perception of its rivals in the international community. For example, in the Indo-Pacific region, replacing the PICs' primary concerns on climate change, the U.S. has continuously hyped up the "China threat theory" (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2019). The American administration argues that Chinese fishing boats are a disguise for the military power of the Chinese Navy. Secondly, the targeting of rival countries, according to the integration strategy, may lead to the U.S. taking military risky actions. Michèle Angélique Flournoy (2020), the former US defence policy advisor, believes that, the rapid development of China's military technology and strength and the resulting decrease of the US military's relative advantage may lead to China's risk-taking

actions. Similarly, if the integration strategy can effectively alleviate its relative decreasing military advantage over China, this opportunism will breed simultaneously and may lead the U.S. to take military actions against its adversaries. Thirdly, the promotion of the integration strategy will exacerbate the trend of zero-sum games in great power competition. The maritime activities and interests of its adversaries, including fishery cooperation and submarine cable construction, have become targets of negative public opinion attacks by the American administration. This will create more friction for constructive maritime cooperation between China and other countries and will severely exacerbate the zero-sum nature of the game.

Impacts on the alliance system

Given the contents about integrating allies' forces in the strategic report, the continuous implementation will inevitably have implications for the alliance. Above all, there will be an impact on deepening and expanding the interactive relationship between the U.S. and the alliance in the emerging domain of national security. For example, the U.S. government's 2022 National Security Strategy report (2022) states that, to resist the threat posed by Russia, America is constantly forming an integrated force with NATO. The development of this integration strategy provides new content for interactive cooperation between the U.S. and the actors in the alliance. Also, the integration strategy contributes to greater cooperation between the U.S. and its allies on traditional issues. For the traditional US-Australia alliance, America, to expand the reserve potential of its naval forces in the Indo-Pacific region, is now collaborating with Australia on the expansion of military bases. The upgrade of the Tindal Air Force Base in northern Australia has been completed to accommodate more nuclear-capable strategic bombers. Similarly,

American efforts are being made to strengthen defence supply chains, a traditional area of alliance cooperation. For instance, the U.S.-Japan joint statement on supply chain cooperation, "Competitiveness and Resilience," was issued in April 2021. Thirdly, this maritime security strategy will form a synergistic effect between the U.S. and its allies. In the case of Australia, the U.S. offers military support to Australia in the fields of joint maritime forces, joint patrols, and joint training. In response, Australia provides economic, military and industrial support for the Pacific Fusion Centre, constructing a platform for the U.S. to perceive the maritime situation in the Indo-Pacific region. However, the integrated alliance-based strategy may constrain existing maritime security mechanisms to some extent. In the Indo-Pacific, the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency's Regional Fisheries Monitoring Centre and the Pacific Fusion Centre are both part of the Pacific Islands region's maritime security mechanism. Their operational reporting remains with the Pacific Islands Forum. However, the U.S. is attempting to incorporate these two institutions into its Indo-Pacific maritime networks through the "Quadrilateral Security Dialogue". This will gradually weaken the public goods nature of these institutions, positioning them as data and information providers for the U.S. intelligence networks in the Indo-Pacific region.

Adjust the global maritime strategic structure

The global maritime structure will continue to undergo continuous changes and adjustments as the U.S., as the subject of the integration strategy, the alliance system, as the object, vis-à-vis competitor nations, as targets of strategic containment, adjust their maritime security strategies, respectively. On the one hand, the integration strategy has had a significant impact on most regions of

the world, such as the American maritime intelligence network in the Indo-Pacific region and its strategic incursion into the Arctic to exploit resources. On the other hand, adaptive adjustments and responsive changes in the maritime strategies of alliances and rival nations will have a restructuring impact on the global structure of maritime strategy. In the case of the Indo-Pacific region, Japan, South Korea, and Australia, as a result of the US-Japan-ROK alliance and AUKUS agreement, have deployed maritime defence strategies against China, Russia, and North Korea. In response to these strategies, China and Russia have adopted responsive adjustments to security strategies and statecraft.

Undermine global strategic stability

Strategic stability, in the context of great power politics, is one of the most important factors for the normal interactions and long-term relations among countries. However, American maritime strategy moving towards integration has gradually caused certain damage to the current global strategic stability. In the nuclear field, the U.S. has launched a series of related construction projects to respond to advanced modern nuclear weapons in China and Russia, including strengthening nuclear command, control and communication systems. The U.S. has also launched a series of social integrations beyond the military field, including related industrial enterprises and modern science and technology industries. According to the defence budget data for the 2023 fiscal year, the U.S. will spend \$34.4 billion to modernise and reorganise the "three-in-one" nuclear strike force of the Columbia-class ballistic missile nuclear submarine, B-21 long-range strike bomber, land-based strategic deterrent force and long-range beyond-visual-range cruise missile (U.S. Department of Defense, 2022). Simultaneously, the U.S.

leverages the AUKUS agreement to promote Australia's nuclear technology development by selling American and British nuclear-powered submarines to Australia. This has seriously undermined the military strategic stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Reshape the global strategic game

American integration strategy will not only form a zero-sum game pattern in its rivalry with its adversaries, but will also lead to a zero-sum outcome on a global scale at a macro level. Taking the U.S.-ROK alliance as an example, Yoon Seok-yeol states during his visit to the U.S. in April 2023 that South Korea's industrial enterprises and new technology industries are creating more jobs and economic activity for American society (The White House, 2023). Such industries include Samsung Electronics' semiconductor factory in Texas and Hyundai Motor's brand factory in Georgia. This integrated relationship in the industrial economy vis-à-vis science and technology, firmly binding the U.S. and its allies, will lead to a convergence between the alliance's and American attitudes towards adversaries. The zero-sum situation in the strategic game between alliance members and rival nations, thus, will be more common, leading to a dramatic reshaping of the global strategic game.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the new change for the U.S. maritime security strategy tends to integrate both domestic competencies and the alliance's forces against rival powers. This strategy is driven by American historical and current needs, values, the relative decrease of military advantage, along with the shifting international order, technological advancement, vis-à-vis threats from both state and non-state actors. It has become a new focal point throughout the specific maritime policies and broader American statecraft.

However, the integration strategy faces challenges from a variety of complex factors, including the American internal political, economic, and social environment, its conflicting interests with the alliance, as well as great power maritime rivalry. Furthermore, this maritime security strategy has all-scale implications. It affects adversaries in shaping threat perceptions, potentially engaging in military risk-taking, exacerbating zero-sum game dynamics, and adjusting the military balance. It also continuously deepens and expands the interactions with the alliance, promoting new cooperation on traditional issues, creating synergies, and co-opting regional mechanisms. Globally, the strategy adjusts the maritime security structure, undermines strategic stability, and reshapes the strategic game.

This paper has considerable academic significance. From a theoretical perspective, there is an academic gap regarding the characteristics of integration in the U.S. maritime security strategy. From a practical perspective, as part of the U.S. statecraft, the integration strategy represents an American active response to the current great power competition and international order. Research on this integration strategy can further inspire studies on U.S. grand strategy and great power rivalry.

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