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Navy-Marine Corps Team



# Deploying Beyond Their Means: America's Navy and Marine Corps at a Tipping Point

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#### [Report: Strain on sailors, fleet reaches tipping point](#)

By David Larter

*Navy Times*

November 18, 2015

After years of surging deployments, the fleet is facing a looming threat: burnt-out warships and the ship crews needed to man them.

A new study argues the strain on sailors is reaching a tipping point as the fleet simultaneously grapples with tensions in the Asia-Pacific, renewed antagonism by Russian forces and the rising threat of Islamic State militants.

The Navy is reaching an inflection point where it will have to build a larger fleet or forward-base more ships to meet the surging demands for ships, squadrons and submarines, according to study author Bryan Clark, a retired commander and analyst with the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments in Washington.

Over nearly two decades, the fleet has dropped from 333 ships to 272 ships, but the number of ships deployed at any one time has stayed steady at about 100 ships, according to the study.

"So if you just do simple math, that would indicate that each of the ships in the Navy is doing 20 percent more work and being deployed 20 percent more than its predecessors back in 1998," Clark said in a roundtable with reporters to unveil the study. "The demand signal hasn't dissipated, it has only gotten worse."

The CSBA study, funded by the Navy League, is the latest in a series of warnings by experts who argue today's 272-ship fleet is too small to prosecute missions around the globe, including keeping carriers in the Middle East and the Asia Pacific at all times. Central Command, which is waging war on the Islamic State group, has been without a flattop since mid-October.

Clark's data show that ships are spending about 25 percent more of their underway time deployed, meaning sailors are getting less underway time for training.

"On any given day in 1998, 62 percent of the underway ships were deployed, the rest were hanging around [the continental United States] doing training ... the kinds of things that you use to gain proficiency," Clark said. "In 2015, about 74 percent of the underway ships were deployed.

"What that equates to is that if you are underway and not deployed, you are on some rigorous schedule to get your [pre-deployment work-up] requirements completed. There isn't a lot of time for additional exercises, additional training, steaming time for proficiency. A lot of that has fallen away as a result of the need to maintain 100 ships deployed with a fleet that has been continuously shrinking."

Navy leaders also have been concerned with the strain on sailors. The former chief of naval operations has said that the fleet is making progress on returning to seven and a half month cruises after years of deployments that ran to eight months and beyond. And the Navy has approved a new long deployment pay, known as Hardship Duty Pay-Tempo, that pays sailors up to \$495 a month after being deployed straight for 220 days.

The demands placed on a smaller fleet are already beginning to show, Clark said. The carrier Dwight D. Eisenhower sailed on back-to-back deployments and had unforeseen maintenance problems in the yards that forced fleet bosses to deploy the carrier Harry S. Truman in its stead.

Clark says the strain of long and erratic deployment plans could lead to retention issues as the fleet gets burned out. All this means that leaders will either have to forward-base more ships to cut transit times, buy a bigger Navy, or deploy fewer ships around the world.

"The Navy is going to have to accept reduced presence or do something to increase the amount of presence per ship," Clark said. One option is to forward-base a second aircraft carrier in Japan, along with the carrier Ronald Reagan, a move that would cut weeks of transit time for West Coast ships headed to 7th and 5th Fleets.

The demands, on top of budget cuts that caused shipyard work stoppages, has forced the Navy to extend deployments repeatedly for as long as 10 months. That in turn has caused wear and tear that threatens to cut ships' service lives shorter, further reducing fleet size.

CSBA presented the report to lawmakers and industry representatives at a Capitol Hill briefing Wednesday morning.

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### [\*\*More Ships Can't Save Overworked Navy; Basing Ships Abroad Can: CSBA\*\*](#)

By Sydney J. Freedberg Jr.

*Breaking Defense*

November 18, 2015

CAPITOL HILL: The Navy and Marines are deploying at a pace they can't sustain, says a report released today. And no feasible defense budget can build a big enough force to solve the problem, the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments says. Even the Navy's famously optimistic 30-year shipbuilding plan — denounced by House seapower chairman Randy Forbes as "fantasyland" — wouldn't close the gap between the supply of ships and the demand for them.

So more shipbuilding isn't the solution. That is probably not the conclusion the Navy League was hoping for when it commissioned the study: "They didn't really know what they were going to get," said lead author Bryan Clark when he thanked his sponsors this morning. But if we can't build our way out, what can we do?

We have to get more deployment time out of whatever ships we've got, said Clark, a former top aide to the Chief of Naval Operations. That includes expedients Congress may not like, especially basing more ships overseas.

Today, the Navy's doing more with less by cutting into crew rest, training, and maintenance, but that's not sustainable. In fact, the consequences have been coming back to bite us already. Unplanned repairs on the carrier Nimitz forced the USS Eisenhower to cover its missions by doing two deployments back-to-back. Then the Eisenhower in turn needed months of extra maintenance. All told, to keep the number of ships on station the same as the number of ships in the Navy shrinks, the workload per ship has risen 20 percent since 1998.

Clark advocates getting more days on station by eliminating long voyages from base to theater. "The transit time to and from the Middle East or the Western Pacific takes about 15 to 20 percent of your deployment," he told reporters. To cut out that transit time — and to get effectively 15 to 20 percent more out of each ship — we need to move ships out of homeports in the US and base them abroad, mainly in the Pacific: Guam, perhaps Australia, and above all Japan.

This is not an option that will endear Clark to Congress. Every ship and crew based overseas means less money being spent in their districts and fewer jobs for their constituents. But Clark argued legislators can be brought round. In 2012, he recalled, he helped then-Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert brief members of Congress on the Navy's rebasing plans at the time. Those included moving four destroyers to Spain and shuffling ships from the East Coast to the West as part of the "Pacific Pivot."

"The members didn't like it, [but] the members understood it," Clark said. They understood that "everybody's losing" — that is, no one district was being singled out unfairly — and that "there's a strategic basis to this that makes sense, [so] they were very accepting of this idea."

So, with ambivalent approval from Congress, the Navy has already begun re-basing some ships abroad. The largest single movement is those four Aegis destroyers to Rota, Spain, from which they'll provide on-tap missile defense for Europe. A submarine is going to Guam. The service is also sending its controversial Littoral Combat Ships for extended tours in Singapore, although for political reasons that country can't be a permanent base. LCS will probably also go to Bahrain as more are built.

Still, the crown jewel of the foreign-based fleet is in Japan. There's already an aircraft carrier, amphibious ships, escorts, aircraft, and crews stationed semi-permanently in Yokosuka and Sasebo. ("Semi" because they come back to the US when due for major overhauls). These ports can accommodate more ships, Clark said. There'd be some shuffling and a few million dollars in upgrades to handle a second carrier, he said, but that's far cheaper and quicker than building a new vessel.

If you allow for training, rest, and maintenance — all of which the Navy's been cutting corners on — as well as transit time across the oceans, then one ship based in the United States spends up to 25 percent of its time forward-deployed. A Japan-based ship is operating forward 67 percent of the time. (The other third it's in maintenance).

In other words, a bird based in Japan is worth three in the US. The higher tempo of operations also costs more — about 30 percent — but you're still getting a lot more days deployed for your dollar.

Moving one more carrier to Japan would have cascading benefits around the world, Clark calculates.

1. Basing a second flat-top in Yokosuka would allow the Japan-based fleet to meet the entire demand for carrier coverage in the Pacific.
2. That, in turn, would free up the West Coast-based carriers from Pacific duties and allow them to focus on the Middle East, eliminating "carrier gaps" in the Persian Gulf.
3. Focusing the West Coast carriers on the Middle East would also free up the East Coast-based carriers to cover the much-neglected European and Mediterranean theaters. Those areas arguably need more coverage all the time, given the resurgence of Russia and the spread of the self-proclaimed Islamic State.

(Basing a carrier in Europe itself doesn't get you much, Clark said, because the transit time from the East Coast is only about a week. It's getting rid of those long transits across the Pacific that really allow the whole fleet to be much more efficient).

Rep. Randy Forbes How attractive is this concept to Congress? The legislators who spoke at the report's roll-out today kept their remarks general, but I followed seapower chairman Forbes down the hallway to press him on the specifics of the Navy's problem.

"It can't be solved by simply building more ships. That doesn't mean that building more ships is not part of a [solution]," Forbes told me. "So while it is true that I can't simply build my way out — I can't even spend my way out, Sydney — that doesn't mean that I don't need to spend more and I don't need to build more."

Can you persuade fellow legislators to give up their home state ships and let the Navy move vessels abroad? "It's not easy," Forbes said, "but... I don't know that you have to go there."

"I think what you have to do is make sure we've got adequate platforms," Forbes said, i.e. enough ships and other power-projection forces like the Long-Range Strike Bomber, all wielded together in a "holistic" strategy.

"What you see Bryan doing is throwing one possibility out there," Forbes said. "You may not agree with every answer [in the report], but it's the question that's important."

That's less than a ringing endorsement of moving ships overseas. But with the shipbuilding budget under pressure, ships in high demand, and the current corner-cutting unsustainable, the Navy needs to do something different — or just do less. Congress has to decide which outcome it hates more.

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## **Unsustainable Pace of Naval Deployments Stirs Concerns**

By Allyson Versprille

*National Defense Magazine*

November 18, 2015

As U.S. naval forces become increasingly stressed and overworked, rivals such as Russia and China are bolstering their maritime assets, former military officials and lawmakers said Nov. 18.

Potential adversaries see weaknesses in U.S. naval capabilities and are moving to close the gap, said House Armed Services Committee member and defense hawk Randy Forbes, R-Va.

Forbes spoke at a Capitol Hill news conference following the release of a Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments report detailing the strain on the sea services.

The report, titled, "Deploying Beyond Their Means: America's Navy and Marine Corps at a Tipping Point," describes the state of the Navy and Marine Corps fleet at a time when ships are deployed overseas at higher rates even as the size of the fleet shrinks.

The Navy's battle force, which is currently composed of about 271 ships, has shrunk about 20 percent since 1998 when the service had 333 ships, the report said. At the same time, the number of ships deployed overseas remained roughly constant at 100. "As a result, each ship is working harder to maintain the same level of presence," the report said.

Additionally, "the percentage of time each ship spent at sea went up over the last decade, since the size of the fleet went down and the number of ships underway rose or stayed the same," the report noted. This has resulted in an unsustainable operating tempo that affects readiness by deferring needed maintenance and giving sailors and Marines less time to train. The high operating tempo can also hinder the efforts of the services to retain talented people because of the long time away from their families, the report said.

"The force is not as ready, and then when you have the Russians and the Chinese who are having a more ready force to fight at the higher tempo, we're going to be less ready," said retired Adm. Sinclair Harris, former vice director for operations on the joint chiefs of staff. Furthermore, "they [the Chinese and Russians] don't care about the cost per ship and per man. They see that gap, and they see an opportunity."

The Marine Corps is strained in part because of a shortage of amphibious vessels. The service has a stated requirement of 38 amphibious ships. However, it has accepted greater risk, "bringing the needed amphibious shipping down to 30 ships and the overall amphibious ship requirement to 33," the report said.

Bryan Clark, a naval analyst who co-authored the report, noted that the Marine Corps' shrinking personnel numbers are further adding to the problem. "The Marine Corps is drawing down to about 182,000 Marines by 2017. That's going to make an operational force of about 108,000 Marines," he said at the briefing. "At the level of deployed presence we have with the Marine Corps today to maintain a one-to-two deployment to dwell ratio requires about 108,000 Marines, meaning in 2017 when the Marines draw down to that level, they will be using their entire operational force to do the continuous forward deployed operations that they're currently tasked with."

The increased operating tempo and reduced availability of ships has also impacted the ability of the Marine Corps and Navy team to respond to crises, said a joint press release from CSBA and the Navy League, an advocacy group that sponsored the study. "The current carrier gap in the Persian Gulf is a result of high operational tempo and backlog maintenance caused by sequestration," the release said.

A second carrier gap will occur in the Pacific in 2016 and gaps will reoccur intermittently in both the Persian Gulf and the Pacific until 2021 when the USS Gerald R. Ford becomes operationally available, according to the CSBA report.

One way to alleviate the strain on the Marine Corps and Navy would be to build more ships, but that option is unlikely, the report said. The Navy's current shipbuilding plan is \$5 billion to \$7 billion more per year than the historical average over the last 30 years, and the service may be compelled to revise this plan to meet fiscal constraints, it said.

Over the next three decades, the Congressional Budget Office calculated that the Navy's fiscal year 2016 shipbuilding plan will require over \$552 billion (in constant 2015 dollars) worth of ship purchases. If the plan is executed as written, the average cost of new-ship construction would be approximately \$18.4 billion per year, 32 percent more expensive than the Navy's historical average annual shipbuilding budgets.

The CSBA report examined the Navy's shipbuilding plan in addition to three alternate plans averaging \$13 billion, \$11.5 billion and \$10 billion per year, respectively. "None of the shipbuilding plans — including the Navy's own plan — would enable the Navy to sustain the global presence it maintains today," the report said.

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### [\*\*Analysts: Presence Demands, Maintenance Deferment Threaten Navy, Marine Corps Readiness\*\*](#)

By Richard R. Burgess

*Seapower Magazine*

November 18, 2015

ARLINGTON, Va. — Sailors from seaman to admiral know that the Navy has been running hard during the last two decades, extending deployments, deferring maintenance and watching a drop in the numbers of ships while keeping a greater percentage deployed. Now, in a new report from a Washington think tank, the situation has been quantified

In the report, “Deploying Beyond Their Means: America’s Navy and Marine Corps at a Tipping Point,” Bryan Clark and Jesse Sloman of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments lay out the case that the Navy and Marine Corps are approaching a point at which the fleet cannot meet the demand for forces from the regional combatant commanders and may face the need to reduce presence abroad, leaving interests and allies vulnerable.

Clark, in a Nov. 17 briefing to reporters, characterized the situation as a “mismatch of the supply of naval forces and the demand signal being placed upon them.”

Clark also briefed an audience Nov. 18 on Capitol Hill as part of the Navy League’s America’s Strength campaign.

He noted that the size of the fleet has shrunk from 333 ships in 1998 to 272 today — a 20 percent drop — while the number of ships deployed has remained at a level of about 100. He characterized the workload of an average single ship as 20 percent greater, with an equivalent increase in deployed time for Sailors.

A larger percentage of the ships underway today are in a deployed status — 74 percent compared with 62 percent in 1998. The number of forward-deployed ships, which reduces the overall number of ships required to maintain a desired level of presence, has increased and will continue to do so as the Navy strives to mitigate the shrinking fleet, Clark said.

The report notes that the deployed posture of the Navy is expensive, stating that the cost of operating and maintaining a deployed ship has increased by 100 percent since 1950 (in same-year dollars) and the personnel costs of Sailors has risen 50 percent.

However, Clark said, the cost of maintaining and crewing a forward-deployed ship is 30 percent greater than for a ship based in the United States.

Ship and aircraft maintenance has suffered because of the increased demand for forces and the budget caps of the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011 that reduced maintenance funds and capacity.

The analysts list three alternative courses of action that could be taken to alleviate the current stress on the fleet. Reduction of presence is a fourth option, but likely one that the strategic demands would not allow.

One alternative is to “increase further the portion for the fleet that is forward deployed,” the report notes. The advantage of forward-deployed ships is that fewer ships are required to maintain a given level of presence. The adaptation of some Military Sealift Command ships as expeditionary ships in relatively permissive environments, with rotational crews, also could reduce the burden on warships. Maintaining forward-deployed ships is more costly, however.

Clark said the forward deployment of a second aircraft carrier in the Western Pacific would enable the Navy to meet the requirement for a carrier strike group year-round using only forward-deployed forces. This would allow the Navy to get by with a total of nine carriers or, with 11 carriers, it would allow the Navy to keep an East Coast-based carrier deployed to the European area of operations, leaving the Persian Gulf to West Coast-based carriers and the Western Pacific to the two forward-deployed carriers.

The analysts also said that a second forward-deployed amphibious ready group (ARG) in the Pacific would similarly eliminate the need for a rotation of an ARG to the Western Pacific.

The second alternative would be to alter the readiness cycles to boost the number of deployments through shorter maintenance and training cycles and increasing use of rotational crews. The disadvantages of this option include increased personnel and maintenance costs and decreased service life of the ships.

The third option, to build more ships, is expensive and subject to national political opposition for budgetary reasons. Clark said the annual budget required to reach the numbers of ships needed to meet requirements would be \$18 billion to \$19 billion, whereas the historical shipbuilding budget in recent years is \$13.9 billion.

“Clearly, the Navy is going to need more money,” Clark said.

The analysts also addressed the Marine Corps and its deployment tempo. The Corps’ forward presence “is chiefly limited by its overall manpower, which is shrinking as a result of the BCA’s reduction in military budgets.”

Clark said the Marine Corps needs 108,000 deployable Marines in the operating forces out of a force that is being reduced to 182,000. The Corps is maintaining a deployment-to-dwell ratio of 1:2 — seven months deployed to 14 months in garrison, and less than the desirable 1:3 ratio — but that could dramatically fall in the event of a major contingency. The Corps would need a force of 200,000, including a deployable force of 120,000 to achieve a 1:3 ratio.

Clark noted that the deployment demands on the Marine Corps “far exceed what the other services are deploying.”

At the Capitol Hill briefing, Rep. Randy Forbes, R-Va., chairman of the House Armed Services seapower and projection forces subcommittee, said that a first tipping point already has been

reached in that nations such as Russia and China see a weakening United States and are increasing their capability as a peer challenger.

“At what point does the U.S. Navy cease to be globally influential?” he asked rhetorically. “We definitely have reached that tipping point.”

Forbes noted that in 2007 the Navy was able to meet 90 percent of combatant commanders’ needs but in 2015 is only able to meet 45 percent.

Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Conn., ranking member on the subcommittee, praised the just-passed relief from the BCA budget caps for two years and the National Sea-Based Deterrent Fund (NSDF) for the Ohio Replacement ballistic-missile submarine, but noted that the “bulge in cost [for the Ohio Replacement] is going to even further degrade the fleet size if we don’t get our arms around it.”

Courtney said the NSDF separated from the shipbuilding budget will give the “breathing space so that can continue the upward trajectory in terms of shipbuilding.”

Rep. Garrett Kilmer, D- Wash., a member of the House Appropriations Committee whose district includes Naval Base Kitsap, noted that many of the Navy’s ship “are tired” and that “we can’t afford [the ships] to sit in our shipyards any more than planned.”

Also speaking at the Capitol Hill event was retired RADM Sinclair Harris, former commander of the U.S. Fourth Fleet, who said that “we are using up our ships faster than we can replace them. ... We’re asking too much of our ships, of our Sailors, of our Marines, of their families.”

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### [\*\*Two USN Carriers in Japan?\*\*](#)

By Christopher P. Cavas

*Defense News*

November 18, 2015

WASHINGTON — With the US Navy stretched beyond its means to meet worldwide commitments, planners are looking at ways to get more operational time out of the ships, aircraft and sailors on hand. One solution, says an influential analyst, is to consider basing not just one, but two aircraft carriers in Japan.

A second carrier in Japan would solve all western Pacific carrier needs, Bryan Clark, a naval analyst with the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, said Tuesday, a day before presenting his findings at a Capitol Hill press conference.

“Not having the transit time from the West Coast saves about 20 percent in the deployment length,” Clark said, adding that his research shows a two-carrier force would result in a 1.4 presence factor, meaning at least one carrier would be available every month of a year, with both carriers available an additional four months.

Time offline includes maintenance and overhaul periods.

The US has maintained a forward-deployed naval force (FDNF) presence in Japan for many years, including one aircraft carrier. That ship is currently the Ronald Reagan, having relieved the George Washington late this summer. Cruisers, destroyers, mine countermeasures ships and a four-ship amphibious ready group also are based in Japan, operating from Yokosuka or Sasebo, along with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit in Okinawa.

Carrier Air Wing Five, based in Japan at Atsugi Naval Air Facility, would probably need to be “augmented” to serve both carriers, Clark said, but he does not see the need to add another complete air wing. The wing is moving to expanded facilities at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni — a larger field that could handle more aircraft, he noted.

“Instead of two full wings, you could have a single augmented air wing — or two partial air wings,” Clark said. “You could also look at alternative ways to equip the air wing.” One possibility, he said, would be to outfit each wing with only three strike fighter squadrons rather than four, due to an ongoing shortage of F/18-C Hornet and F/A-18 E/F Super Hornet strike fighters.

Clark does not see the need to beef up the surface forces in Japan, other than to send an additional cruiser to provide anti-air commander escorts for the carriers.

Clark also acknowledged there are numerous political, logistical and budgetary issues with the idea.

The recommendation is included in a report released Wednesday, “Deploying Beyond Their Means,” on the effect of continuing high operational requirements on the US Navy and Marine Corps.

In addition to adding a carrier in Japan, Clark would also forward-deploy an additional amphibious ready group to the western Pacific, possibly in Guam, and restore carrier rotations in the Sixth Fleet’s European theater of operations — a Cold War staple that fell off with the end of that conflict and the shift in focus to the Arabian Gulf region.

The Navy is required by law to maintain an 11-ship carrier fleet, although a temporary, 10-ship level is in effect until the carrier George H.W. Bush is commissioned next year.

While the two Japan-based carriers could handle normal Western Pacific duties, Clark said, the five west-coast based carriers would rotate in and out of the Gulf/Indian Ocean region, while the four carriers on the Atlantic coast would rotate in and out of the European theater.

Beefing up carrier presence in those regions, he said, would be “indicative of American resolve. It shows that the US is not walking away from the Asia-Pacific, and it would restore some presence to the European theater.”

There is no indication, however, that the US Navy is considering moving another flattop to Japan.

“There has absolutely been no conversation related to forward-deploying an additional carrier in Japan,” a Navy official said curtly when asked about the report.

But some on Capitol Hill might be considering the idea.

“Deploying an additional forward-based carrier to the Pacific is not a new idea, but given the demands on the carrier fleet it is an option that’s time may have finally come,” one Senate staffer said.

“Along with the benefits identified in the report, perhaps the most important one is that deploying a second carrier in the Pacific on a permanent basis would offer a real demonstration of our enduring commitment to our allies and partners in the region. We need to take a hard look at the peacetime and war-fighting benefits, associated military construction costs, and the propensity of an ally like Japan to consider a deployment like this.”

The full report is available at <http://csbaonline.org/publications/2015/11/deploying-beyond-their-means-americas-navy-and-marine-corps-at-a-tipping-point/>

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### **[Report: Navy needs massive annual spending on shipbuilding](#)**

By Wyatt Olson

*Stars and Stripes*

November 18, 2015

The Navy will need to spend \$4 billion to \$7 billion more on shipbuilding each year to sustain current presence levels into the future, according to a report released Wednesday by a Washington, D.C.,-based think tank.

Years of underfunding and increased demand have already eroded the ability of the Navy and Marines to respond to crises and maintain a presence in the world’s hotspots, says a Center of Strategic and Budgetary Assessments report. The report was sponsored in part by the Navy

League, whose stated purpose is to educate and motivate the American people to support U.S. maritime capabilities.

While the number of ships deployed overseas between 1998 and 2014 remained consistent at about 100 vessels, the full fleet shrank by about 20 percent, the report said, meaning ships, sailors and Marines have faced longer deployments, and vessels have had to skip maintenance to preserve the Navy's overseas presence.

Some Republican presidential candidates have brought up these declining numbers, often citing a statistic that the Navy has fewer vessels now than 100 years ago. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus has called comparing modern ships' capabilities with their archaic predecessors as pointless, "like comparing the telegraph to the smartphone."

However, today's ships are working longer and harder.

Between 2001 and 2009, the amount of time Navy ships spent at sea — known as operating tempo — increased by 8 percent, and the tempo for surface combatant ships jumped by 18 percent, the report said. The number of ships at sea peaked at 86 percent in 2009, but remains high at 74 percent for 2015, the report said.

The Navy has experienced additional stresses in recent years. Plans by the Obama administration to refocus the Navy in Asia as part of the "Pacific pivot" have been hampered as America's attention has been diverted to the resurgence of jihadist fighters in Iraq and a conflict between Russia and Ukraine that's had NATO on alert. And the Navy, along with the other services, has scrambled to make do with less in the wake of sequestration spending limits.

Extended operating tempos and work at Navy shipyards interrupted by sequestration have left a backlog of maintenance for nuclear aircraft carriers.

"The backlog culminated in late 2015 with a Persian Gulf "carrier gap" between the departure of the USS Theodore Roosevelt and the arrival of the USS Harry S. Truman," the report said. "A second carrier gap will occur in the Pacific in 2016, and gaps will reoccur intermittently in both theaters until 2021, when the USS Gerald R. Ford becomes operationally available."

The current "heel-to-toe" deployment schedule also affects the Navy's so-called "surge capacity," the report said. The Navy and Marine Corps usually can forward deploy three carrier strike groups and three amphibious ready groups simultaneously within 60 days of a crisis, the report said. But with the crowded maintenance schedule and less spending on readiness, "the Navy and Marine Corps are now only able to surge one [carrier strike group] and one [amphibious ready group]," the report said.

The report concluded that the Department of Defense has three main options to relieve strain on the Navy: Reduce the Navy's presence in trouble spots around the world, build more combat ships or get more funding from Congress to maintain the current tempo of operations.

"More shipbuilding is the most enduring way to increase the ability of the fleet to promote forward presence," Bryan Clark, one of the report's authors, wrote in an essay published online Wednesday.

But his essay in *The National Interest* magazine also notes that even the Navy's current shipbuilding plan will fall short of sustaining today's presence level.

"That shipbuilding plan requires about \$5 billion more per year than the Navy has historically received," Clark wrote. "Shipbuilding plans that stay within historical fiscal constraints are even less able to sustain today's overseas naval presence."

In his essay, Clark offered a fourth alternative where the Navy would create "menu options" from which combatant commanders could choose the exact force structure desired, rather than choosing only between carrier strike groups and amphibious ready groups.

"Without a significant investment by Congress and the administration in the Navy's future, we are placing our national defense, our leadership in the world, and the strength of our economy and health of the global economy at great risk," Sinclair Harris, a retired admiral and former vice director for operations on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said in a statement issued by the Navy League.

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### [\*\*Second Forward Deployed Aircraft Carrier In Pacific Could Help Navy Meet Readiness Needs, Study Says\*\*](#)

By Valerie Insinna

*Defense Daily*

November 18, 2015

The Navy and Marine Corps are overextended and stressed, with not enough ships to meet demands and maintenance deferred as deployments become longer and longer.

A new study by the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments proposes the forward basing of additional ships as a way to increase naval presence around the world. More specifically, the Navy could forward deploy a second aircraft carrier in the Pacific, and together, those carriers would be able to support all 7th Fleet needs.

"What that means is now your West Coast carriers in the United States can deploy entirely to the Middle East," said Bryan Clark, who authored the study, called "Deploying Beyond Their

Means: America's Navy and Marine Corps at a Tipping Point." The four carriers stationed on the U.S. East Coast could cover demands in Europe, including addressing threats from Russia.

"That makes a lot more sense than trying to just base the carrier in Europe because the carrier in Europe only has about a week transit time back to the United States," he told reporters during a Tuesday conference call previewing the report. It takes six to eight weeks for a carrier to back and forth from the West Coast to the Western Pacific, and that transit time can amount to about 20 percent of a deployment.

United States Fleet Activities Yokosuka, in Japan, offers enough space pierside to accommodate two carriers, he said. "You would have to do some construction there to bring an additional pier up to standard, if you want to have the ability to bring them both into port at the same time."

Instead of adhering to the Optimized Fleet Response Plan model—which includes eight months deployed in a 36 month cycle—forward-deployed ships spend eight months a year operating, and then receive four months of maintenance.

If an additional carrier is forward deployed to the Pacific, "the operational model you would have is that the carriers would not generally be in port at the same time," Clark said. One carrier would be operating while the other would be undergoing maintenance, although there would be periods where both carriers could be deployed.

Forward basing has several downsides, including increased costs—about 30 percent more than basing ships out of the United States, he said. That model would also wear out ships and aircraft more quickly than planned because they would be operating more often.

One solution, at least on the aircraft side, is for a single air wing to support both Pacific-based carriers, Clark said. When both carriers are underway at the same time, the air wing would split into two smaller forces would operate with the carriers.

"If you have two full air wings that are out there, both of which are operating, training, staying proficient and then deploying on two different carriers, that's going to generate a lot more aggregate wear and tear than if you have a single augmented air wing," he said.

Another option mentioned by Clark—to buy more ships—was echoed by lawmakers who attended the roll out of the study on Wednesday.

"Our budget is not large. It is not adequately sized to meet our needs," said Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-Wash.).

The Navy in 2007 procured ships at a rate of three a year, and that slow procurement put pressure on the rest of the fleet, said Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.), the ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee's seapower and projection forces subcommittee.

“We are paying the price for what was going on ten years ago in terms of the under-investment in shipbuilding,” he said.

However, Clark noted that the current shipbuilding plan is already strained, and in future years will require more money than the Navy usually receives.

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### **Deploying Beyond Their Means: The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps at a Tipping Point**

By Bryan Clark

*National Interest*

November 18, 2015

The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps are operating today under unsustainable levels of stress because of a fundamental mismatch between the demands placed on them and their supply of ready forces. Both services are striving to establish deployment cycles they can maintain over the long-term, but are unable to stick to them. Deployments continue to be longer or more frequent than planned; as a result morale is down among Sailors and Marines and the condition of their ships, aircraft, and equipment is suffering.

It isn't surprising that demand is high for naval forces. The Islamic State is fighting U.S.-backed forces on multiple fronts; states throughout Africa and the Middle East such as Libya and Syria are failing or in crisis; rivals including China [4] and Russia [5] are rewriting international boundaries; and illicit trafficking persists throughout the littorals. The presence requested by Combatant Commanders and required by civilian officials to address these challenges exceeds what the naval services can deliver through their existing processes to prepare forces for deployment.

Over the last decade the Navy and Marine Corps met the demand by simply doing more with less. Between 1998 and 2015 the Navy shrank by 20 percent, from 333 to 271 ships. The number of ships deployed overseas, however, remained the same at about 100 ships. Each ship was, therefore, working about 20 percent harder to meet the demand. Deployment length statistics make this clear: in 1998 four percent of deployments lasted more than six months, while in 2015 all deployments lasted more than six months.

The Marine Corps is similarly making do. It is shrinking to 182,000 personnel by 2017, which will result in an operational force of about 108,000 Marines. If they maintain a 1 to 2 Deployment-to-Dwell (D2D) ratio, these Marines can just meet today's requirements for overseas presence. This gives each Marine about 14 months at home for every 7 months away, which is acceptable but less than what Sailors and other service members generally get. And if any new demands arise, the Marines will need to accelerate deployments and adopt wartime rotation ratios.

Squeezing more deployed time out of each ship, Sailor, and Marine comes at a cost. The Navy's own studies found Sailors are leaving the service due to long deployments, and satisfaction surveys reveal looming recruiting and retention problems if longer and more frequent deployments continue. The material condition of ships and aircraft are also degrading. The lack of carrier presence in the Middle East today [6] resulted from the need for an extended maintenance period for the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower after being on virtually back-to-back deployments over the past three years. And the Navy faces a shortfall of three squadrons worth of F/A-18 Super Hornets because aircraft are reaching their flight hour limits faster than planned.

The Navy has four options to maintain today's level of overseas presence without overworking the fleet:

- Grow the fleet through increased shipbuilding
- Increase the operational tempo of each ship while paying for more maintenance and personnel compensation
- Forward base more ships to reduce their transit time to theater
- Package forces differently to more efficiently meet demand

First, more shipbuilding is the most enduring way to increase the ability of the fleet to provide forward presence. But even the Navy's current shipbuilding plan will fall short of sustaining today's level of presence given the deployment cycles, including the Optimized Fleet Response Plan (FRP), that the Navy wants to use. That shipbuilding plan requires about \$5 billion more per year than the Navy has historically received. Shipbuilding plans that stay within historical fiscal constraints are even less able to sustain today's overseas naval presence.

Second, the operational tempo (OPTEMPO) of each ship and unit could be increased, providing more deployed time per ship per year. This is the model used by our forward-based ships in places such as Japan, Bahrain, and Rota. This approach is about 30 percent more expensive, however, than operating and maintaining a ship on the normal FRP schedule. It would also reduce the service life of ships and associated aircraft, and could drive out personnel unless they receive additional compensation.

Third, the Navy and Marine Corps could continue to forward base more ships and units overseas, reducing their transit time and improving their responsiveness to crisis. The Navy increased its forward basing of ships by about 25 percent between 1998 and today. The Marines, for their part, began deploying to Darwin, Australia, in 2013 and stood up Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (SP-MAGTFs) in Europe last year for crisis response. These forces increase forward presence by both eliminating the transit time from CONUS and maintaining a higher OPTEMPO than their CONUS-based counterparts. As noted above this adds a 30 percent premium to the operations and maintenance costs for these ships and the

Government Accountability Office earlier this year concluded the Navy was not providing these forward-based ships the funding or time to complete the maintenance they need.

Forward basing, however, may be a way to address high demands for two elements of Navy and Marine force structure that are hard to increase in the near-term, even with a larger shipbuilding plan: carriers and large amphibious ships. These ships are expensive and require a large industrial base to produce. They cannot quickly be constructed at a higher rate. U.S. carriers and amphibious ships are particularly scarce in Europe. Today the Navy maintains a “hub” of naval forces based around a carrier strike group (CSG) and an amphibious ready group (ARG) in the Pacific and the Middle East. In Europe the Navy and Marine Corps maintain a set of small forces tailored to ballistic missile defense and crisis response. These may not be enough to deter Russian aggression in the north or respond to Islamic State violence in the south. The presence in Europe could be increased with a carrier and an ARG if an additional one of each were forward based in the Pacific. This would enable all Pacific demands for carriers and amphibious ships to be met by forward-based forces; carriers and ARGs based on the west coast of CONUS would support demands in the Middle East and those on the CONUS east coast would support those in Europe.

And fourth, the Navy could create new “menu options” for Combatant Commanders to choose from when they order up naval forces through the Global Force Management process. Today the Navy limits the menu to CSGs, ARGs, and a few other force packages. If a somewhat larger range of choices were available, commanders may be able to order a smaller package to get what they really need, rather than having to order the whole buffet because that’s what’s on the menu. This would have the effect of lowering the overall demand signal so it is more sustainable, and may have the side effect of being more effective at the task than a larger group that includes the needed capabilities and many others besides.

The Navy should be investigating all of these options to create a sustainable plan for maintaining its forward presence into the future. Either that, or presence demands must be reduced to prevent the fleet and force from unravelling. If we don’t, the fleet will begin to break down anyway, forcing a reduction in presence. Before that happens we should have a honest discussion about the value and purposes of naval presence and the best ways to deliver it.

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### **[CSBA: U.S. Navy Must Choose Between Presence, Readiness](#)**

By Michael Fabey

*Aviation Week*

November 18, 2015

Soon the U.S. Navy will be forced to decide between keeping a global force or maintaining its ships, aircraft and equipment, a recent Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) report says.

“Today the Navy and Marine Corps are facing a fundamental choice: maintain current levels of forward presence and risk breaking the force or reduce presence and restore readiness through adequate training, maintenance, and time at home,” says the report, released Nov. 18 and written by Bryan Clark, CSBA research fellow, and Jesse Sloman, organization research assistant.

“This choice is driven by the supply of ready naval forces being too small to meet the demand from Combatant Commanders (Cocoms),” CSBA reports. “To close the gap, the Department of Defense (DOD) will need to grow the fleet and force, base more ships overseas, or pay to maintain a higher operating tempo (Optempo).”

CSBA says, “The extended Optempo of the last few years – combined with interrupted work at Navy shipyards caused by sequestration resulting from the Budget Control Act (BCA) – has resulted in a backlog of deferred maintenance for the nuclear aircraft carrier (CVN) fleet. The backlog culminated in late 2015 with a Persian Gulf ‘carrier gap’ between the departure of the USS Theodore Roosevelt and the arrival of the USS Harry S Truman. A second carrier gap will occur in the Pacific in 2016 and gaps will reoccur intermittently in both theaters until 2021, when the USS Gerald R. Ford becomes operationally available. The experience of the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower illustrates how delaying repairs can play havoc with future requirements planning: two back-to-back deployments in 2012 and 2013 took so large a toll on the vessel’s material condition that its subsequent maintenance period lasted 23 months – a full 65% longer than was originally planned for.”

One of the scenarios the report tries to address is carrier shortfalls with the forward-deployed naval force (FDFNF) in certain areas of responsibility (AOR).

One deployment model adds a second carrier to the FDFNF force in the Seventh Fleet AOR while maintaining today’s presence levels. “With two carriers stationed forward, the requirement for one CSG on-station year-round in the Pacific can be met completely by forces based in theater. As a consequence, the requirement for carriers is reduced from 11 to nine,” CSBA says.

“An additional forward-based CVN could be used to increase presence rather than reducing requirements. This model expands European presence to address a revanchist Russia and instability in North Africa and the Levant by establishing a third CVN-based hub in Europe and adding a second FDFNF CVN to the Seventh Fleet AOR. While basing a second CVN in the Pacific would seem to only benefit Seventh Fleet, the result is rotational CVNs from the West Coast of CONUS (continental U.S.) would be able to focus entirely on Fifth Fleet requirements, while CVNs from the CONUS East Coast could support the new European hub. All Seventh Fleet CSG requirements will be met by FDFNF CVNs.”

At a media briefing, Clark said the Navy could also start to rethink what “constitutes” a full air wing, opting to deploy a smaller force as needed.

The report notes, “There is a natural tension between Cocoms, who want to maximize the number of naval assets they have to employ, and naval force planners, who must balance the requests of all the Cocoms with the need to give crews and ships time to carry out maintenance, upgrade systems, and conduct training.”

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### **[Report: Navy and Marine Corps Strained to Breaking Point; Second Forward Carrier in the Pacific Could Help](#)**

By Sam LaGrone

*USNI News*

November 19, 2015

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Faced with insatiable demand for resources for a fleet that is already overworked and under-maintained, the Navy and the Marine Corps need to ease the strain on the services or risk “breaking the force,” according to a new report from the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment released on Wednesday.

“The Navy and the Marine Corps are providing the maximum forward presence — or exceeding the forward presence — they can sustainably provide based on the service’s own readiness models,” co-author of the report Bryan Clark told reporters on Tuesday in a conference call. “That [operational tempo] that results is wearing out the force and the fleet faster, and you’ll see further impacts on the personnel side, especially as this continued high OPTEMPO starts to wear down a generation of sailors and Marines.”

While authors Clark and Jesse Sloman have uncovered little not already known to naval observers, their study collects hard numbers outlining the Navy and Marine Corps presence problems.

For example, the Navy has maintained a deployed presence of about 100 ships consistently since 1998 despite the fleet falling by 20 percent (to about 271 ships). That level of demand required surface ships and nuclear carriers to forgo maintenance to meet the demand of the regional combatant commanders — in large part to serve requirements for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Navy, in particular, has attempted for the last several years to claw back from a maintenance deficit from overly extended carrier deployments but has been stymied by sequestration reductions in defense spending due in part to the Budget Control Act of 2011.

“The backlog culminated in late 2015 with a Persian Gulf ‘carrier gap’ between the departure of the USS Theodore Roosevelt and the arrival of the USS Harry S. Truman. A second carrier gap will occur in the Pacific in 2016 and gaps will reoccur intermittently in both theaters until 2021, when the USS Gerald R. Ford becomes operationally available,” read the report.

On Tuesday Clark said the service has found the seven-month maintenance periods it has set aside for the carriers post-deployment wasn’t enough time to get the ships ready and cascaded into additional maintenance backlogs.

“Maintenance is really driving the problem. With the carriers we’re finding that [seven months] really isn’t enough time to do the maintenance between deployments,” he said.

The Navy is currently working to create a more predictable model for carrier strike group — a 36-month maintenance, deployment and readiness cycle called Optimized Fleet Response Plan (OFRP). The Navy has argued that by putting maintenance at the beginning of the cycle, the ships will be able to stay in the yard for the full scheduled maintenance period — whereas today, a ship might have its deployment extended, which gets it into the yard late and often means work gets skipped to stay on schedule.

The recently departed Truman CSG deployment is the first to operate under the plan that promises seven-month deployments, a six-month maintenance cycle and a 15-month readiness period in which the crew and flyers of the CSG would maintain their skills in the event they would need to deploy quickly in an emergency.

However, Clark said that the OFRP’s 15-month readiness period is an expensive concept, and the Navy has to cut funds for sustainment periods in similar deployment schemes in the past.

“The Navy hasn’t been really paying for [sustainment],” Clark said.

The report did offer some suggestions to mitigate the strain of the current status quo of overworked ships, sailors and Marines.

“The options that are available to them are either building more ships or a larger force — which may not be fiscally possible. You could expand forward basing. Get more readiness out of each individual ship by increasing OPTEMPO,” Clark said.

Notable among the report’s suggestions on how to increase presence without breaking the back of the fleet was to forward deploy a second carrier to the Pacific to ease the burden of the sending ships from the West Coast to patrol the region.

The Navy could consider moving a second carrier to the Pacific to operate in conjunction with the forward deployed USS Ronald Reagan (CVN-76) and sharing berthing space at Yokosuka, Japan.

“Japan would be the best option to add a second carrier, if you wanted to do it quickly,” Clark said.

While adding an additional carrier forward isn’t a new notion and one the Navy isn’t currently studying, the study has piqued the interest of some in Congress.

“The report illuminates the utility of deploying an additional forward-based carrier in the Pacific theater. You really cannot ignore the benefits, both for the Asia-Pacific and for the Middle East and Mediterranean maritime hubs,” a Senate staffer told USNI News.

“The Navy, U.S. Pacific Command [PACOM], Congress and our allies like Japan who could potential host another carrier are going to have to think really hard about exploiting this opportunity.”

***From the Report:***

*Forward-based forces are able to provide more presence than those based in CONUS for several reasons:*

- *They either do not have to transit to and from their operating areas or have a much shorter transit time than their CONUS-based counterparts.*
- *They do not undergo deep maintenance periods such as overhauls. When an overhaul is due, the ship or aircraft is swapped out with a new platform. The crew generally swaps out as well and remains forward with the new ship.*
- *They do not conduct extensive retraining between operational periods. Because they operate so often, forward based ship and aircraft crews are often able to maintain a higher level of proficiency than their CONUS-based counterparts.*

In addition to another forward deployed carrier, the report suggested the Navy find ways to both moderate COCOM demand and offer commanders different options that would stress the force less.

The Navy has been exploring the use of so-called alternative force packages designed to augment the capabilities of existing ships and create non-traditional naval options for the COCOMs. For example, the Navy’s surface forces are exploring using more surface action groups for high-end military presence missions instead of a much larger carrier strike group.

“Maybe these alternative force packages would have the effect of reducing the demand signal [from the COCOM], maybe these alternative changing it from one size fits all to an a la carte menu,” Clark said.

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## [Report: Overworked Navy at a tipping point](#)

By Hugh Lessig

*Daily Press*

November 27, 2015

The Navy faces a crisis on the near horizon with too few ships, tired sailors and emerging global threats, leaving the Pentagon with no easy choices, a new study concludes.

The main problem facing the Navy and Marine Corps is "that demand for naval forces exceeds the supply they can sustainably deliver," according to the report from the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) released Nov. 18.

Titled "Deploying Beyond Their Means: America's Navy and Marine Corps at a Tipping Point," the report lays out options for the Defense Department that involve either a fundamental policy shift or spending more money. Each choice has an implication for Hampton Roads, the home to the world's largest naval base in Norfolk and the headquarters of Huntington Ingalls Industries, the nation's largest military shipbuilder.

The report cites several options for the Navy:

- Pull back. The Navy could reduce its presence around the globe, but that would come amid rising tensions in Syria, Ukraine and China.
- Build more ships. The study says it would require another \$4 billion to \$7 billion per year to build a fleet that could sustain the Navy's current global presence while still meeting guidelines for training and maintenance. In real dollars, the Navy's shipbuilding account has been around \$16 billion for years.
- Move another aircraft carrier to Japan to address the Asia-Pacific region. Or Congress could set aside more money to maintain the current operating tempo, pumping more money into sailors' paychecks and maintenance budgets.

The Defense Department "will eventually need to reconcile the mismatch between the supply of naval forces and the demands placed on them," the report states.

Authored by Bryan Clark, a CSBA senior fellow, and research assistant Jesse Sloman, the report comes as the U.S. is without an aircraft carrier in the Middle East, the first such gap in nearly a decade. It occurred when the USS Theodore Roosevelt left the region in October. The USS Harry S. Truman, which deployed from Norfolk last week, will fill the void.

The report frames the crisis as a result of trying to do more with fewer resources.

The Navy had 333 ships in 1998, and now it's down to about 271. But the workload has remained constant during that time.

"As a result, each ship is working harder to maintain the same level of presence," the report states.

In 1998, 62 percent of Navy ships were deployed instead of training near home. That rose to a high of 86 percent in 2009, dropping to about 74 percent this year.

Increased operating tempo has caused problems. In 2010, the amphibious assault ship Bataan rushed to aid victims of the Haiti earthquake one month removed from a seven-month deployment. While in Haiti, it suffered an equipment failure that forced a delay in operations.

In 2011 and 2012, the Essex experienced mechanical problems due to skipping maintenance, causing the ship to miss one Pacific exercise and scale back participation in another.

More recently, the aircraft carrier Dwight D. Eisenhower endured back-to-back deployments in 2012 and 2013, resulting in a maintenance period that was 65 percent longer than planned.

Crews have also felt the strain.

The report cited a 2014 survey by two Navy officers that found 49.8 percent of enlisted personnel and 65.5 percent of officers felt that operational tempo was too high.

To address these concerns, the Navy has instituted a new deployment cycle called the Optimized Fleet Response Plan. It's designed to make the rotation of deployments and homecomings more predictable, and reduce at-sea periods to a maximum eight months.

This plan, once fully implemented, "will better enable some naval forces to complete training and maintenance between deployments," the report states. "However, it will also reduce the presence they can deliver overseas ..."

The study was sponsored in part by the U.S. Navy League's "America's Strength" campaign, which lobbies for more naval resources.

In a separate article released Nov. 18, the same day as the report, Clark said the fleet will begin to break down if the Pentagon doesn't act.

"Over the last decade," he wrote, "the Navy and Marine Corps met the demand by simply doing more with less."

Among those reacting to the report last week was retired Rear Adm. Sinclair Harris, who said, "We cannot allow the erosion of the Navy-Marine Corps team to continue."

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## [Think tank calls for second US carrier in Japan](#)

By Hiroyuki Akita

*Nikkei Asian Review*

November 27, 2015

TOKYO -- A U.S. independent policy research institute has issued a provocative report calling for deployment of an additional aircraft carrier in Japan.

The report highlights the need to bolster U.S. Navy's capabilities in the western Pacific to counter China's military buildup.

An aircraft carrier is an offshore military base. Deployment of two aircraft carriers in Japan could greatly affect the military balance in Asia. The report will likely generate much debate among policy wonks and pundits.

In late November, the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments released the policy report: "Deploying Beyond Their Means: America's Navy and Marine Corps At a Tipping Point."

The Washington, D.C.-based institute is mostly comprised of former officials of the U.S. Department of Defense and U.S. military forces. As a result, the CSBA has close ties with the Pentagon.

In 2010, the CSBA laid out a new military strategy, called AirSea Battle, in the face of the Chinese military's efforts to boost its capabilities in the Asia-Pacific region. That report also gained much attention at the time.

While the U.S. is increasingly hard-pressed with its national defense budget, the government faces a host of challenges, such as ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Africa as well as rising tensions in Europe.

On top of these uncertainties, Washington also has to find ways to remain engaged in the Asia-Pacific region, where China's People's Liberation Army has been bolstering its presence. The CSBA has compiled the new report as a prescription for this very challenge.

### Radical prescription

The report says there is a need to deploy two aircraft carriers in the Asia-Pacific region in response to China's rising military power and other contingencies. Currently, the USS Ronald Reagan is in Yokosuka, Kanagawa Prefecture, while the USS Theodore Roosevelt is in its home port of San Diego. These two carriers can be deployed to respond to any situation in the region.

However, the USS Theodore Roosevelt needs to return to the U.S. West Coast for repair and checking on a regular basis. The transit across the Pacific Ocean from the West Coast takes up about 20% of the deployment time, said Bryan Clark, one of the report's two authors.

If that is the case, the report argues, it would be more efficient and cost-effective to deploy a second aircraft carrier in Japan and operate two of them there.

Growing budgetary pressure on the U.S. Navy is one reason for this policy recommendation, the report says.

As tensions are escalating in different parts of the world, the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps increasingly engage in activities that exceed their capabilities. Moreover, the Navy plans to increase its fleet from the current 272 vessels to 321 by 2028. However, the report also notes that this fleet expansion will be difficult to achieve due to rising shipbuilding costs.

What is interesting about the report is that it is not just a mere policy argument but is based on concrete numerical analysis. As such, the report assesses the impact higher shipbuilding expenses will have on U.S. maritime power. It also calculates the time needed for the fleet's training, inspection, repair and other activities.

Then, the report presents multiple options for making Navy and Marine Corps operations more efficient, in addition to the deployment of a second aircraft carrier in Japan.

#### Magnet for controversy

In reality, however, bringing another carrier to Japan would cause controversy on both political and diplomatic fronts. For one thing, a new facility would have to be built to accommodate the additional aircraft carrier. For another, local residents would likely oppose such a plan.

When asked about the report by U.S. Defense News magazine, a Navy official denied such a deployment scenario, saying, "There has absolutely been no conversation related to forward-deploying an additional carrier in Japan."

"We have never discussed such a plan with the U.S.," said a Japanese government official.

Meanwhile, a former senior official of the Defense Department said that submarines and ground-based missile units should play a central role in U.S. forces in Japan, as China and North Korea can easily target an aircraft carrier with their missiles. Other defense experts at the CSBA hold similar views on this issue.

In the U.S., private think tanks are very active in studying wide-ranging policy options and drawing up recommendations. Some of these arguments are logically coherent, but may not be implementable.

The CSBA's new report may be categorized as one such argument. But it will likely encourage a new discussion in the Defense Department.

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### [Low-power warning](#)

*Daily Press*

December 2, 2015

The United States asks much of its military and those demands are taking toll.

So says a study released last month by the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments and sponsored in part by the U.S. Navy League, which lobbies for more naval resources. It concludes that the responsibilities being placed on the shoulders of the Navy and Marine Corps, "exceeds the supply they can sustainably deliver."

That's a worrisome assessment in a dangerous world, one that has profound implications for the nation's defense. But it's also a finding with particular resonance in Hampton Roads, home to thousands of sailors and Marines as well as the nation's largest shipbuilder.

The study found that years of extended deployments and shrinking personnel numbers have left that branch of the armed forces near exhaustion. It says there are too few ships and too few sailors for what the service is being asked to do.

That's not exactly ground-breaking news. A June report by the Government Accountability Office made similar assertions, detailing the wear and tear on Navy vessels and the fatigue felt by those who wear the uniform. It made the point that even routine maintenance was being delayed to the detriment of overall readiness.

And there is no shortage of anecdotes from members of the Navy who have served on ships ill equipped for the duties they are expected to perform. It is the obvious byproduct of a shrinking force being asked to deploy to all corners of the globe.

Naval power is critically important to the projection of American military strength in places such as the Middle East, where the United States is engaged with an array of enemies but reluctant to deploy a large fighting force on the ground.

The Obama years have also seen the nation belatedly pivot toward Asia in an attempt to contain the expansionist tendencies of a Chinese military eager to flex its muscle and assert regional influence. Tension has been ratcheted higher of late by China's willingness to put the People's Liberation Army Navy into contested waters throughout Southeast Asia.

Yet, while politicians in Washington keep sending the Navy and Marine Corps to exert the nation's will, it has been unwilling to provide the resources and funding to accommodate the demands being placed on the force.

That is not sustainable. And the nation must determine whether it will pull back from its prominent role in the world's hot spots, whether a redeployment of available resources offers the best way forward, or if a greater investment in funding for the armed forces is the most appropriate course for America's future.

Any of those options will affect Hampton Roads. After all, members of the Navy and Marine Corps aren't nameless, faceless bodies in uniforms being sent out to fight the nation's battles.

Rather they are residents of our communities, members of our families or our neighbors next door. They are overworked, they are tired and they need us to pay attention to their concerns.

But what Washington chooses to do will echo beyond the personnel involved. About 40 percent of the region's economic activity can be traced directly to spending on national defense.

Oftentimes we use this space to call for greater economic diversity in the region, as it is necessary to the stability of communities here. But we should not lose sight of how important it is that the Defense Department continue to support our military installations and related contractors.

So bolstering the Navy and Marine Corps means more money in local pockets. And while that should not be the determining factor in how we proceed, it is undeniably a factor that will affect Hampton Roads, regardless of what comes next.

For our part, we see a world beset by danger, one that is served by American military power applied thoughtfully and appropriately. The Navy and Marine Corps are a critical component of that. They should be given more resources, even as we carefully consider where their force can do the most good.

What we cannot do is allow the ships to deteriorate further, or for our sailors and Marines to go without the rest, training and attention they deserve. This report is simply the latest reminder.

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