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## Maritime Strategy and Naval Innovation (Continuation)

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Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School

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## NPS NRP Executive Summary

Title: Maritime Strategy and Naval Innovation

Report Date: 10/10/2019 | Project Number (IREF ID): NPS-19-N001-A  
Naval Postgraduate School, School of International Graduate Studies (SIGS)



NAVAL RESEARCH PROGRAM  
NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

MARITIME STRATEGY AND NAVAL INNOVATION

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Project Summary

The Navy is addressing fundamental changes to its strategic focus to enable it to confront strategic challenges in the Indo-Pacific region. The emergence of near peer geostrategic competition has become the central planning focus for the Navy as it considers its plans, programs, budgets and policies over the rest of this century. This requires the re-orientation of maritime strategy and the employment of naval power away from the emphasis on supporting land operations over the last quarter century in the irregular wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This study addresses the strategic implications of near peer competition in the Indo-Pacific region, which involves a variety of new actors that will play a role in the US-China rivalry in this geographic domain.

**Keywords:** *Strategy, programming, planning, budgeting, PBBS, Indo-Pacific, China, India, coercion, deterrence, war.*

## Background

This project marks the fourth year that SIGS/NSA has supported the N50's efforts to better synchronize strategy development with the Navy's plans/programs and policies to develop a fleet that meets the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century's fluid environment. This study examines the implications of maritime rivalry and war in the Indo-Pacific.

A naval buildup is underway throughout the Indo-Pacific region – spending could grow by 60 percent over the next five years. The Naval buildup reflects complex regional strategic dynamics and bears little resemblance to naval arms races of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Technology is changing the nature and character of a potential war at sea in the Indo-Pacific. The prospects for escalation are far more dangerous than had previously been realized. Crisis-management and political decision-making will be more difficult throughout the Indo Pacific as navies avail themselves of the latest technologies.

## Findings and Conclusions

The purpose of this study is to better prepare for a potential war in which the Navy finds itself positioned against America's most dangerous near-peer competitor. The Navy must get ready for this contingency. This research affects all the Navy's principal warfighting communities: surface warfare, aviation, undersea operations, and Special Forces. This study will help the N50 integrate the implications of war in the Indo-Pacific into the Navy's strategy development process. The study will help junior and senior naval officers address the Navy's most pressing global contingency: war in the Indo-Pacific. The research examines theoretical and empirical data relevant to the phenomenon, and provides a theoretical and empirical baseline through which naval officers can consider the prospects of war in the Indo-Pacific.

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The implications of this study are that Navy needs to rediscover long-forgotten writings on deterrence, coercion, and strategy to analyze the dimensions of the strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific. The results of the study expand the knowledge necessary to address this strategic problem. The findings confirm the analysis in the security studies literature about the necessity to become grounded in deterrence theory, coercive strategies, and war-planning contingencies.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The Navy should continue to deconstruct political, military, and strategic dynamics in the Indo Pacific, which is likely to be the next theater for a major, near-peer conflict.