

## **MARITIME STRATEGY AND NAVAL STRATEGY**

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A country's maritime power is closely connected to maritime strategy. If we analyze the modern meaning of the word, i.e., establishing a perspective plan to achieve a certain goal, we will see that all the components of the maritime power – navy, merchant navy, shipyards, harbors, maritime relations system – can be the object of maritime strategy.

However, if we analyze the word strategy as a part of military art thus placing ourselves in the field of military science we must admit that the old Greek concept of strategy, i.e., the art to order or the art to prepare and conduct a war, cannot be the same today. It is hard to establish war strategic purposes for one or more states which should be achieved only by one service: Navy, Air Force or Land Forces regardless of the way the armed services are presented.

While in ancient times military strategy was seen as a way to lead forces in battle and in the Middle Ages it referred to theatre operations, whereas in last century's battles it referred to the immense strategic fronts, today we use the concept of geostrategy which encompasses continents. It can be considered as a world strategy expanding and developing in the field of space strategy.

The subject we are analyzing here, maritime strategy, is still present in a certain aspect of military strategy. Moreover, we will always have to study it because military science, as any other science, deals with concrete facts in time and space.

Of the three fields of military art, tactics, operational art and strategy, tactics is specific to each of the services. The actions conducted by navy units or greater tactical units will never be the same as the land forces or air tactical actions.

Thus, the ships or ship units, when conducting operations, cannot be considered defensive or offensive as the Land Forces are. All the ships are offensive. Even those with support missions like the mine-sweepers which from morning till night must look for mines and destroy them in order to safeguard navigation for antisubmarine ships which search for submarines every day and make intense and exhausting efforts. Only at the operational level can we approach the terms offensive and defensive. But even at the level of operational art, preparing and conducting operations, the military actions of a single service is less probable. For over half a century, military operations have been imbalanced or asymmetric and the conflict areas have been criticized by the international public media

through its most authorized organization, the UN and solving the conflictual situations meant the action of a multinational force under the UN mandate.

This type of military action, multinational, gives an even greater importance to the services' wartime and peacetime missions but this will not change the armed combat's main principles. As Mahan showed in his book "Navy influence on history, 1660-1783" published in Boston in 1890, "*while many of the conditions of conducting a war vary from one age to another, depending on the development of weaponry, there are certain lessons history taught us, lessons still valid today. These can be considered principles*".

While at these two levels, tactical and operational art, we can deal with problems at the armed service level, at the strategic level it is clear that dealing with problems within services is impossible, at least at the level of military actions.

The principles of strategy are valid in any historic period. They are less influenced by the development of equipment and weaponry compared to the principles of tactics. As Mahan stated over 100 years ago: "from time to time, the tactics' superstructures must be changed and sometimes its whole structure is changed. But the old principles of strategy remain unchanged and rock solid".

Due to the amplitude the word strategy involves at many levels, it seems that the subject of naval strategy is very sensitive and theoretical in the case of a country with reduced shores like Romania.

There are enough arguments in favor of these subjects as there probably are arguments questioning the existence of the "Romanian naval strategy".

Before enumerating some of the arguments in favour of the development of this topic, we present a reason valid not only for our plead but for stimulating the courage to approach any such types of subjects. This argument consists in the necessity to develop and stimulate the theoretical part of military art and, at the same time, apply theoretical ideas in the practical activity.

Such well conducted and encouraged connection of theory with practice has beneficial effects on the institution we serve: "Romania's army".

Our theoretical subject, 'naval strategy', must be known and analyzed realistically in order to be put in practice.

The way naval strategy theory is put in practice as well as navy operations and tactics is an art more or less beautiful depending on the commanders' personality and training from all points of view.

Military art as part of military science encompasses naval art with its three levels: tactical, operational and strategic. Naval strategy, as the highest form of preparing and conducting a war, is necessary regardless of a state's maritime power.

In the past, all the studies and opinions on naval strategy had as main idea the necessity to concentrate naval forces for the decisive battle to gain control of the sea. After the Second World War, strategy underwent important changes.

The surface ships were not fighting against each other and airplanes, missiles and submarines were the main enemies. Big surface ships had as main mission to destroy land objectives, an insignificant mission in the past but predominant at the time.

The maritime strategic thinking has been developed and now using the fleets is more important in peacetime than in wartime.

For most planners of navy actions, the indirect battle with the enemy fleet has become an exception, but knowing the way naval forces are used in peacetime is much more necessary and current. Keeping the seas open for commercial traffic and protecting it against terrorism and also the possibility to apply the naval power are the two main peacetime missions the fleets have to accomplish.

We can say that maritime strategy can be defined as that part of military art which studies wars at sea and also campaigns, operations and battles in maritime theatres to achieve the objectives.

When referring to navy, we often come across the words “strategy” “maritime” and “naval”.

It appears to be no differences between the notions of “maritime strategy” and “naval strategy” or, by extension, between naval operations and maritime operations. We could say that maritime strategy refers only to the use of seas and oceans while naval strategy includes the use of rivers, channels or lakes and closed seas.

However there can be other interpretations as well. One of these can be deduced from the notion of maritime power. The connection between maritime power and maritime strategy is achieved by the state’s policy. Thus, the maritime power is first of all the fruit of the legislative and executive leadership and is necessary to establish political and economic relations on sea. In creating and developing a maritime power and in both fields the state’s policy has the decisive role, the way the leaders consider and understand the role and importance of the sea.

In literature, the expression naval strategy refers directly to the use of all forces and means including military ones in order to achieve some goals with the sea as a theatre. These goals are perceived as a result of a conflict. But, as we define maritime power not only from a military point of view, maritime strategy can also be the way to achieve the maritime power goals in peacetime. In other words, we can speak about a maritime strategy with the goal of developing the maritime power factors (mainly Navy, merchant navy, harbors, international relations) and also a naval strategy referring to the science and art of using the military maritime forces to obtain victory in a war.

The first meaning, that of maritime strategy is analyzed and applied for all states with a sea, thus for our country as well.

The second meaning – naval strategy – used especially in wartime, can be applied to countries with powerful military maritime forces. These states can achieve their political goals by a confrontation at sea applying a certain naval strategy. In other words, in this

case, military strategy finds its correspondent in the naval strategy. However, the states with less developed maritime forces cannot set political goals at sea.

We can say that the term ‘maritime strategy’ can have the meaning of training and coordinating the actions of economic, political, diplomatic and military forces in order to exploit all the country’s resources. The term ‘naval strategy’ as part of maritime strategy, establishes the actions of the military maritime fleet in relation with those of the military air and land forces. Naval strategy is an integrant part of military strategy and expresses the military strategy requirements limited to the actions of forces and means specific to military and merchant navy.

As military strategy operates with “means of strategic action”, naval strategy uses the term “naval means of strategic action” or “constitutive parts of naval strategy” or maritime strategy concepts.

The immediate purpose of naval strategy is control over the maritime space or as Geoffrey Till stated in “*Maritime strategy and nuclear age*”, “maritime strategy deals with using the sea for own interests preventing the enemies from using it for themselves”.

The naval strategy referring to ships and also the maritime strategy referring to the maritime power elements are domains which must be elaborated and known not only by those developing maritime activities but also by all involved in it.

In conclusion, studying the maritime power and naval strategy must be a constant concern for military theorists and the theories must be effective in the practical activity.

