

Professionally converted for accurate flowing-text e-book format reproduction, this unique book examines the role of the Navy in the protection of shipping, the core mission of any navy. Despite this, over the past century, the capital ship primacy of Mahan and offensive ethos of Nelson have repeatedly caused naval leaders to relegate protection of shipping to a lesser included mission status, often leading to devastating losses of shipping when war came. Today, the protection of shipping mission still finds itself behind more high-profile missions such as strike warfare and ballistic missile defense. Naval leaders must recognize that the dynamic range of threats, littoral maneuver challenges, and unique political and ROE limitations found in the limited conflicts we now face will continue to require joint force commanders to provide for the direct defense of shipping in future conflicts. The latest revisions of joint, Navy, and Allied doctrine leverage advances in maritime domain awareness and coordination with the maritime industry to counter low-intensity threats from piracy and terrorism, but do not sufficiently address more complex threats. Only through increases in joint/combined capacity for protection of shipping tasks, and improved levels of awareness, training, and readiness in the protection of shipping mission will operational level commanders have the means to ensure the safety of shipping along all points of the threat spectrum. Protecting commercial shipping at sea is one of the oldest missions of any navy. The first known navy in history was formed by the Minoan civilization (2200-1450 B.C.) to protect their merchant trade on the Aegean Sea. Over three thousand years later, in 1794, the United States Congress authorized construction of the USS Constitution and the five other inaugural frigates of the United States Navy to defend U.S. merchant shipping from attacks along the Barbary Coast. Throughout history, protection of commerce on the high seas has always been a *raison d'être* for any navy. Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan famously highlighted this fundamental relationship between navies and commerce, writing *The necessity of a navy, in the restricted sense of the word, springs.. .from the existence of a peaceful [means of] shipping, and disappears with it.* This core tenet of Captain Mahan's thesis endures today in the U.S. strategic thought, with *preserve freedom of the seas and facilitate and defend commerce* highlighted as key guiding principles in the National Strategy for Maritime Security and Naval Operations Concept 2006

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