



Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

**STUDIES**

## **Restoring American Seapower: A New Fleet Architecture for the United States Navy**

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Resources: Forces & Capabilities

The United States faces a very different set of security challenges than it has since the Cold War. Great power competitors such as China and Russia improved their military capabilities over the last two decades while America focused on Middle East insurgencies, and now appear willing to challenge the international order. They are likely to replace transnational terrorism in the near future as the primary concern of U.S. military planners. Gaining an advantage in great power competitions, deterring aggression, and reassuring allies will require changes to the ships, aircraft, weapons, sensors, basing, and readiness processes of U.S. naval forces, which essentially operated unopposed since the Berlin Wall fell. CSBA's *Restoring American Seapower: A New Fleet Architecture for the United States Navy* explores those implications and proposes a new fleet construct for the U.S. Navy to pursue over the next two decades.

The Navy will need to take a new approach to deterring great power competitors than it did against regional powers such as Iraq. This new approach will also require innovative operating concepts, adaptive force packages, and a more distributed and robust naval posture that emphasizes effectiveness over efficiency. Together, new ways of operating, new deployment approaches, and new force packages require a larger and more diverse fleet of ships, aircraft, and unmanned systems. If the U.S. Navy does not pursue such a new architecture, by the 2030s the United States may not be able to effectively compete with great powers such as China and Russia or even regional powers such as Iran. This will undermine its alliance relationships, its economic health, and ultimately its place as an exceptional country.