



Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

**STUDIES**

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

November 18, 2015 | **Bryan Clark, Jesse Sloman**

Resources: Forces & Capabilities

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. This choice is driven by the supply of ready naval forces being too small to meet the demand from Combatant Commanders, as adjudicated by the Secretary of Defense. 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.

Global navies are a common attribute of nations with economic and security interests in multiple regions outside their own. The Spanish, Dutch, and British empires all included fleets able to protect their shipping lanes; transport troops to far flung colonies and holdings; and threaten the territories and commerce of their enemies. The United States followed suit as it became a global economic and military power during the 19th century, starting with its Navy's first deployment against Barbary pirates in 1802 and continuing through the voyage of President Theodore Roosevelt's "Great White Fleet" in 1907.