



HIGH INTENSITY

There are skirmishes that a gunboat can handle... But there will be, on a large or a small scale, combats requiring greatly superior attack and defence capabilities against threats like missiles or mines. If the naval battle between "organized forces" seems no longer relevant, multi-polarization of the world and rearmament of many countries could resurrect players capable of carrying fire and extreme violence on the seas. The high intensity naval combat is far from gone.

THE MARITIME BATTLEFIELD

The sea is a complex battlefield where threats are multiple and the danger exists in three dimensions. In the air, the missile threat prevails. It requires detection capabilities, jamming and accurate and timely destruction. On the seas, threats require identification capability in all weather and retaliatory measures to meet immediate means in proportionate manner. Underwater, the proliferation of submarines and the extreme complexity of the means of detection and control are a threat difficult to counter.

A NAVY DESIGNED FOR BATTLE

Facing these multiple risks only naval forces able to face the high seas and heavy fighting can operate. Lasting on sea, operating in harsh environmental conditions and demonstrating resilience are essential qualities.

The Navy can do it thanks to its strike force, which is based primarily on its aircraft carriers, submarines and frigates, supported by a complete logistic fleet.

The aircraft carrier (AC) plays a dual political and military role. It is an expression of the country's power, but also a true mobile floating base which operates an air force.

Nuclear Attack Submarines (SSN) are capable of conducting operations discreetly. They also participate in the protection of naval forces or implement commandos.

But a combat navy also requires frigates. Not only because AC and SSN cannot act alone and need these heavily armed frigates for their protection and support. But also and primarily because they are essential to control maritime areas.

A TECHNOLOGY ONE STEP AHEAD

Such vessels require an efficient industrial and technological defence base. The next SSN of the Barracuda program is thus one of the most complex industrial projects in the world, ahead of Ariane or Airbus. France is today a leader in the naval defence industry, enabling the country to maintain its strategic autonomy.

HANDLING THE LONG RUN

The implementation of an oceanic navy capable of acting at long distance and over a long time requires not just money, but also technological capabilities and specific operational skills that large nations took decades to acquire. The Navy has a recognized expertise in all areas of modern naval warfare. This is a long term effort and it does take very little time to lose control of an expertise that would require a huge effort and many years to be acquired again, as the experience of some countries shows today.

A NAVAL POWER IN THE SERVICE OF NATIONAL AMBITION

"Maritimisation" of the world exacerbates state tensions and increases the risk of armed conflicts on the seas or coastal fringes. Navies are at the heart of defence strategies and security of States. They must be able to ensure maritime safety missions, but also cope with high intensity combats in a complex and dangerous environment.

It is in this dual context that France is developing and operating its oceanic navy. If the Navy will protect the vital or commercial interests of our country, exert influence on the world stage and enforce maritime law, this is not its only mission. The first vocation of the navy of a great maritime power remains high intensity naval combat.



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