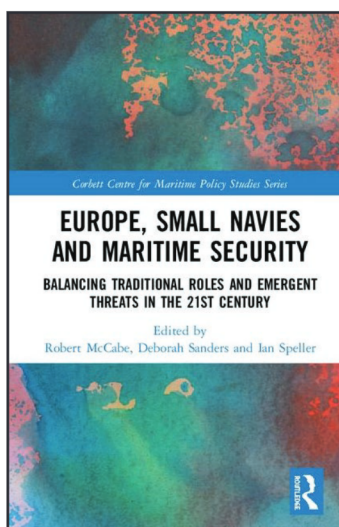


command and control as it seeks to counter the Pakistani-Saudi nexus on the one hand and to oust US forces from Afghanistan on the other. As with any foreign support, it has brought with it plenty of problems. For instance, as the Iran-Saudi cold war has heated up in recent years, Taliban leaders have been forced to choose between their patrons. Furthermore, Pakistan in particular has been able to turn its support on and off based on its perceived interests vis-à-vis the US and Kabul, at times forcing Taliban leaders to dance to its tune. Nonetheless, the overall impact of this foreign assistance has been to help turn the Taliban into a much more structured and professional insurgent force than it was before the mid-2000s.

Analysing the internal dynamics of an active insurgent organisation, especially one as complex and fragmented as the Taliban, is a significant challenge – one to which Giustozzi has risen admirably. The detailed accounts in this book provide unparalleled insights that should inform understanding of the movement today, of the shadow wars being fought in the wider Middle East and South Asian region and also of how insurgent movements can adapt and prosper despite the best efforts of Western military power to counter them. ■

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Europe, Small Navies and Maritime Security: Balancing Traditional Roles and Emergent Threats in the 21st Century

Edited by Robert McCabe, Deborah Sanders and Ian Speller
Routledge, 2019

Size does not always matter – at least not only in terms of numbers and systems. That statement could not be more relevant to the ‘small navies’ of Europe. As maritime security studies focus mainly on the larger navies of the more powerful states, this edited volume fills a noticeable gap and brings a relevant and timely contribution to the field.

Europe, Small Navies and Maritime Security: Balancing Traditional Roles and Emergent Threats in the 21st Century concedes that the small navies of Europe have ‘less operational range and less blue water ambitions’ (p. 26), as well as deploy fewer ocean-going

capabilities than the more powerful navies. However, this does not mean that small navies are unimportant. Technology, ambitions, missions, and, most importantly, maritime culture and operational experience have a crucial role in the effectiveness of a navy. As such, small navies should not be excluded from the definition of seapower.

The book successfully demonstrates that small navies can be powerful, although in different ways from the traditional Mahanian concept of naval power where ‘bigger is better’ (p. 27). The book therefore makes an important contribution to the debate about European seapower in terms of governance, capacity-building and capability development in a comparative approach. The first part of the volume addresses theories on how small navies adapt to their maritime security environments and deal with their own sense of seapower. The second part delves into the ‘European context’ and focuses on several examples of the adaptations of small navies – for instance, Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands, among others. Of particular interest is Chapter 13, which offers a comparative analysis of the challenges Croatia, Ireland and Malta have to face regarding the tailored development of their navies.

As the book explains, small navies generally develop in ways that reflect their resources, politics and geography. For instance, some countries more than others need to have a wider definition of maritime security. This is the case with Norway, where maritime security is a ‘central component of [its] national military strategy’ (p. 133). As such, Oslo defines its national military strategy fundamentally as a maritime one, with joint air and

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land operations closely organised around naval priorities – which are themselves defined according to maritime security interests and perceived threats.

The book's central argument is that small navies, maybe more than the larger ones, have to define their purpose

Europe, Small Navies and Maritime Security demonstrates that all small navies face similar challenges. They need to make choices regarding their naval ambitions – balancing between brown-water and green-water navies, or between being a coastal power and having the ability to conduct expeditionary operations. Small navies also need to choose between status projection and other types of capabilities. Ultimately, they need to prioritise endeavours and resources, especially regarding access to technology and procurement.

This discussion forms part of the book's central argument: that small navies, maybe more than the larger ones, have to define their purpose. This is what Geoffrey Till elegantly calls 'maritime future' (p. 16). This calls for a holistic, all-encompassing approach to maritime security for small navies, especially across military and civilian sectors.

The book explains that one way to define purpose is to address threats and challenges to the national interest. For instance, since the fall of the Soviet Union, small navies in Europe have focused less on traditional seapower, such as sea control and sea denial.

Chapter 11 discusses how the Royal Danish Navy leverages its maritime influence through status and political projection in international institutions, and less through genuine naval power projection or participation in multilateral naval operations.

However, with shifts in the geopolitical environment, 'traditional concerns and sea denial operations are back on the agenda' (p. 7). This has resulted in national interests being redefined. As such, small navies again need to mitigate strategic risks and potentially prepare for higher-end conflict. For instance, Scandinavian navies are coming back to 'classic' naval power, and have accordingly increased their technological capabilities, coastal defences and ability to conduct littoral warfighting, and this is reflected in targeted procurement choices. Similarly, the Royal Netherlands Navy has invested primarily in strengthening its constabulary and special forces capabilities.

Finding a purpose is even more relevant in the face of common security challenges. Russia represents such a challenge for the coastal navies of the Black and Baltic Seas, as well as for Nordic countries. As the Kremlin is now coming to terms with its own naval ambitions, it has been somewhat successfully recapitalising its navy with smaller, lighter assets equipped with more advanced standoff and sea-denial capabilities – what can be called the 'Kalibrisation' of the navy, named after the Russian Kalibr land-attack and anti-ship missiles.

The Kremlin is not only a traditional security challenge for the small navies of Europe but also poses a threat in the grey zone. Russian disruptive actions might, for instance, include sea-mining and sabotage operations,

disruption of lane markers, or cutting seabed communication cables, particularly in the Baltic and Black Seas.

The volume makes the necessary point that maritime security studies are no longer just about size or capabilities

As the book shows, Ukraine has been particularly swift to adapt its naval strategy in the face of Russian aggression since 2014 and the illegal annexation of Crimea. Ukraine is in a unique situation: on top of the usual challenges of having a small navy, it is fighting an undeclared armed conflict with a more powerful opponent. While Russia has been increasing its naval footprint in the Black Sea by strengthening coastal and power projection capabilities in annexed Crimea, Ukraine has adopted the concept of a 'mosquito fleet' – 'small, fast and relatively cheap platforms, backed up by gunboats, mines and coastal defence ships, [which] engage in a strategy of coastal defence with the aim of making it impossible for an enemy to approach one's coastline' (p. 174). By leveraging increased coastal defence capabilities and targeted procurement of surface platforms, Ukraine seeks to raise the cost of access and operations for Russia in Ukrainian territorial waters.

'Maritime future' and defining a purpose for small navies is also about finding the appropriate level of cooperation and burden sharing with allies and partners. For small navies, cooperation is key to compensating for existing

deficiencies. Whether at the level of NATO or regional alliances, pooling resources and sharing tasks and responsibilities lead to more effective comparative advantages. Cooperation should not be limited to naval forces but also focus on other maritime stakeholders such as coast guards and civilian organisations. As argued in the book, '[O]nce political and military cooperation is well-established, small navies can pursue niche specialisation' (p. 95). This, however, should not lead to over-specialisation and placing small navies into restrictive niches of expertise.

The Baltic Sea is a prime example of where small navies of coastal states have been cooperating effectively to outline synergies, tackle vulnerabilities and pool resources – for instance through increased intelligence sharing and military-to-military contacts. Coastal states also have to commonly 'manage disruptions in a grey-zone conflict situation' (p. 72), which can be addressed through cooperation. There are,

however, many limitations in Baltic Sea security cooperation – first and foremost a 'lack of integrated and shared domain awareness' (p. 124), a common operations centre, and strong sea-denial capabilities.

Small navies need to enhance existing comparative advantages on the development and use of modern technology. The book describes these as 'force multipliers' (p. 43). Among them, unmanned systems and automated platforms for command, control and communication are paramount – all the more when it comes to operations in Arctic waters and the High North.

Procurement choices for small navies must therefore be made not only based on capabilities and missions, but also on purpose. Mitigating a superior enemy's seapower with the help of modern technology is a credible option. For instance, if it is not achievable for a small navy to procure credible underwater platforms, increased anti-submarine warfare capabilities may be an option.

Europe's small navies do not lack post-modern seapower. However, they will remain, at least for the foreseeable future, 'constabulary by nature' (p. 66). Nonetheless, much can be done, through increased cooperation and harnessing modern technology, to enhance their sea-denial capabilities in defensive operations. *Europe, Small Navies and Maritime Security* shows that the future of small navies of Europe is about cooperation and technological hedging. This is particularly relevant when it comes to joint Maritime Domain Awareness, and especially early-warning systems. Overall, the volume makes the necessary point that maritime security studies are no longer just about size or capabilities, but genuinely about purpose and endeavour. ■

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