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Professor Mark Wegge

Module 4: Joint Capabilities

20 October 2025

DBF 4.3: U.S. Naval Capabilities

Response

QUESTION: *How do the U.S. Navy's capabilities support the joint community? What capabilities does the U.S. Navy bring to a joint operation? (minimum of 250 words)*

Primary Post (*by October 20, 2025*)

The U.S. Navy supports the joint force by delivering sea control, forcible entry, and theater air and missile defense because these capabilities open, protect, and extend operational reach. It also enables long-range maritime strike, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) from the sea, undersea dominance, mine countermeasures, distributed afloat logistics, and sealift, as well as ballistic missile defense, which projects joint movement and fires (Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS], 2019; JCS, 2021). The Operational Objective is to establish a lodgment ashore enabling follow-on joint operations, using sea control and local air superiority as the ways, and carrier air, submarines, surface combatants, and amphibious lift as the means.

Sea control comes first, since the force needs assured movement and fires. Joint doctrine states, "An amphibious operation is a mission in which the objectives to be secured are ashore" (JCS, 2019, p. I-1). That mission depends on protected sea lines and an Amphibious Objective Area

cleared of maritime threats. Attack submarines, surface combatants, and maritime patrol aircraft enable that clearance and guard the lines of communication (LOC).

Control of the air follows, because the surf zone and convoys are vulnerable. Doctrine directs that “Counterair operations usually begin early in the conduct of a campaign to produce the desired degree of control of the air” (JCS, 2021, p. I-4). Carrier aviation, Aegis warships, and integrated fires provide local air superiority, then persistent air defense for the lodgment. In constrained seas and chokepoints under anti-access and area denial, sea control becomes a joint effort with air and land forces, and allies often enable sensors, fires, and basing. Clear supported and supporting relationships preserve tempo and prevent culmination.

Risk is highest during ship-to-shore movement from enemy air and mines. Mitigation is early counterair, mine countermeasures, and a coherent C2 handover (JCS, 2019, pp. III-4–III-7; JCS, 2021, pp. I-3–I-6). Airpower advocates argue that joint airpower alone secures entry. Naval anti-air warfare warns that “Jamming and deception can create confusion and uncertainty in the defense” (O’Neil, 1981, p. 6). Sea-based sensors and shooters close that gap.

References

Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. (2019). Joint publication 3-02, amphibious operations (JP 3-02).

Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. (2021). Joint publication 3-01, countering air and missile threats (JP 3-01).

O’Neil, W. D. (1981, February). Naval anti-air warfare. *National Defense*, 65(365).

Secondary Post #1 (*by October 22, 2025*)

QUESTION (Vicki): (*minimum of 150 words*)

Vicki, sharp post. You frame capability as effect, not hardware, and that is the right lens. I would add two refinements that sharpen the operational payoff.

First, tie sea control to the Operational Objective ashore. Sea control is a means that supports the lodgment and follow-on tasks, then it expires unless sustained. The weaker side exploits that with sea denial, especially through submarines and mines. That argues for undersea warfare and mine countermeasures as coequal enablers with amphibious warfare and air and missile defense.

Second, your point on Naval Integrated Fire Control is well taken. I would temper the claim that whoever commands the air over the sea, commands the sea. In chokepoints under anti-access and area denial, air control and sea control fuse into a joint fight with land-based fires, space, cyber, and allied sensing. The Navy still leads, but it wins by integrating those effects to preserve access, protect the ship-to-shore movement, and finish the lodgment on time.

References

N/A

Secondary Post # 2 (*by October 22, 2025*)

QUESTION (Daniel): (*minimum of 150 words*)

Daniel, strong post. You map platforms to effects and keep the joint frame in view. Two refinements would tighten the operational logic.

First, anchor capabilities to the Operational Objective ashore. State the OPO up front, then show how sea control and local air superiority are the ways, and carrier air, submarines, surface combatants, and amphibious lift are the means that secure the lodgment and the follow-on fight. Sea control is temporary. The weaker side exploits gaps with sea denial through submarines and mines, which argues for undersea warfare and mine countermeasures as coequal with carrier air and surface fires.

Second, temper “global access” with the realities of anti-access and area denial. In chokepoints, control of sea and air becomes a joint contest that depends on land-based fires, space, cyber, and allied sensors. Naval aviation still brings reach and speed, but it wins by connecting sensors to shooters for decision advantage, not by carriers alone (Majumdar & LaGrone, 2014; Leighton, 1928). Submarines remain the stealth hedge that holds targeting systems at risk.

References

Leighton, B. G. (1928, September). The relation of aircraft to sea-power. U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, 54(9), 728–745.

Majumdar, D., & LaGrone, S. (2014, January 23). Inside the Navy’s next air war. USNI News.

Secondary Post # 2 (*by November 19, 2025*)

QUESTION (Robert): (*minimum of 150 words*)

Robert, sharp post. You lay out sea control, sea denial, and strike well. I would press two refinements to tighten the joint frame and the Operational Objective (OPO). First, sea control is local and temporary, gained to place and protect combat power where the land objective demands. Joint Publication (JP) 3-02 is blunt that amphibious operations secure objectives ashore, so sea control and local air superiority are conditions to establish the lodgment that enables follow-on joint operations (Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS], 2019, p. I-1). Second, air and missile defense is a combined-arms effort. Doctrine starts counterair early to open operational access for all components, not only the fleet, which reinforces your point on freedom to maneuver but grounds it in joint timing and tasking (JCS, 2021, p. I-4). One more seam worth naming. Clear Commander, Amphibious Task Force (CATF) and Commander, Landing Force (CLF) supported and supporting relationships preserve tempo during ship-to-shore and reduce risk at handover (JCS, 2019, pp. III-4–III-7).

References

Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. (2019). Joint publication 3-02, amphibious operations (JP 3-02).

Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. (2021). Joint publication 3-01, countering air and missile threats (JP 3-01).

Professor Feedback

Jeff,

Meets expectations. Good answer and responses. Your analysis of sea power and its components are spot on. Also, your examination of capabilities through the Op Art lens is well above the average.