

Title: The Global Order at Sea: Why Do Navies Matter to Statecraft?

Speaker: Dr. Alessio Patalano, Professor of War and Strategy in East Asia Department of War Studies, King's College London

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Where: Strasser Dining Hall, H-114

POC: Ms. Julia Cumings

SYNOPSIS:

The late nineteenth century took the relevance of naval power to statecraft to an unprecedented global scale. By the mid-twentieth century, the global order at sea was predominantly the result of the status and fighting superiority of national fleets. It was about a hierarchy of power among a handful of state actors, which naval arms agreements of the 1920s and 30s crystalized, and the introduction of nuclear weapons at sea reaffirmed with deadly devastating power and reach.

Today, the sea as a factor of significance in international affairs is no longer related to its function as a medium for the projection of power alone. Indeed, this notion has evolved to encompass the capacity of states to project such power to secure their (exclusive) access to fish and energy resources (Till 2009, 23–28). Yet – this evolution brought about a wider change in the global order at sea as well. The understanding of the sea as a space in which good governance allows for a better management of its resources, how states exploit the sea for the survival of humanity has come to matter increasingly more alongside its use to project capabilities, hard and soft.

This is the core argument explored in this talk. Navies matter to statecraft not merely because they enable a state to do through their material capabilities. They matter because they empower state with a sense of legitimacy that unfolds from upholding a behavior that is aligned with the principles of freedom of navigation and the content of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Today, how navies go about the business of ensuring maintenance of order at sea matters. Indeed, the process of recognition of one's place in the hierarchy suggests that a naval hierarchy is not just a matter of power, but a question of recognition from peers as well. The talk examines what that entails for the way in which we conceptualize what navies do, and where and how they do it.

BIO:

Alessio Patalano is Professor of War & Strategy in East Asia and Director of the King's Japan Programme at the Centre for Grand Strategy at the Department of War Studies (DWS), King's College London (KCL). Prof Patalano is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society (FRHistS), Adjunct Fellow at the Institute of Contemporary Asian Studies, Temple University Japan, a Visiting Professor at the Japan Maritime Command and Staff College (JMCSC) and a Senior Fellow at the highly influential think tanks Policy Exchange and the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). In 2022, he also became fellow at the Royal Navy Centre for Strategic Studies, and Sir Herbert Richmond Fellow in Maritime Strategy at the Council on Geostrategy. His most recent monograph is titled *Post-war Japan as a Seapower: Imperial Legacy, Wartime Experience, and the Making of a Navy* (Bloomsbury 2015), and he co-edited with James Russell the book titled *Maritime Strategy and Naval Innovation: Technology, Bureaucracy, and the Problem of*

Change in the Age of Competition (Naval Institute Press, 2021). His latest volume, co-edited with James Russell and Cat Grant, is titled *The New Age of Naval Power in the Indo-Pacific: Strategy, Order, and Regional Security* and is forthcoming with Georgetown University Press in 2023. Prof. Patalano regularly comments on radio, newspapers, and television networks, and regularly writes opeds for *Nikkei Asia Review*.

Prof Patalano's next monograph project is titled *Steel and Statecraft: How Navies Shape Our World*; it investigates how and why states build up and maintain navies and why that matters crucially in the transformation of international order. His current research focuses on maritime strategy, Chinese strategy and sub-threshold activities, UK defence policy towards the Indo-Pacific and the relationship between military power and statecraft in Japan since 1945.