

# MARINE & Oceans



**Trump 2**  
*Make the Navy  
great again*

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**M&O INTERNATIONAL**

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# Make the Navy great again

**What will Donald Trump's foreign policy be? With which allies and which consequences for Europe and France?**

**What priority will the 47th President of the United States give to the US Navy and, more broadly, to maritime interests during his second term in office?**

**Marine & Oceans gives the floor to experts in US politics and defence, who believe that the security of the country and the world will ultimately depend on the return of the American naval power.**





November 2024, Atlantic Ocean. The world's largest aircraft carrier, the USS *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN 78), in formation with the Arleigh Burke class missile destroyers, USS *Winston Churchill* (DDG 81), USS *Mitscher* (DDG 57), USS *Mahan* (DDG 72), USS *Bainbridge* (DDG 96) and USS *Forrest Sherman* (DDG 98).



© DR

# Trump's world, episode 2

By **Gérald Olivier\***

From next January 20<sup>th</sup>, the United States will again be led by Donald Trump, as it was from 2017 to 2020. The New York real estate billionaire, who became an American TV star and author of worldwide bestsellers, first elected president in November 2016, was overwhelmingly elected for a new term on last 5 November. This is the first time since 1892 that a US President has served two non-consecutive terms.

Trump's first term was both promising and chaotic. Promising in terms of renewed global economic growth and the beginnings of peace in the Middle East (the Abraham Accords signed in August 2020). But chaotic in his methods, since Trump is neither a politician nor a diplomat, making no effort to comply with the customary rules of protocol when dealing with his peers, leaders of nations economically and strategically less powerful than the United States... Above all, his last year in office was marked by the covid-19 pandemic, the famous 'China virus', which killed millions of people and forced the world economy to come to its knees...

What should we expect from 'Donald's' return? Karl Marx once wrote that History repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce. A reference to Napoleon III, who he believed had incomparable merits to his uncle, Napoleon I. For the world of 2024, the threat of a 'tragedy' remains, but there is nothing comical about it, and it looks like anything but a farce. We're not talking about a resurgence of the Covid – although that can't be ruled out entirely – but rather about a world moving towards a third world war through the multiplication of regional conflicts that could pit the great powers against each other. The world of 2025 is not the world of 2020. Trump had left a world at peace. He finds a world marked by two tragic and contagious conflicts: a war in Ukraine and a renewed conflict in the Middle East. He finds a Chinese power more determined than ever to achieve its avowed ambition of bringing Taiwan back into its fold. It finds a Europe fragmented and weakened by the Ukrainian conflict, by its internal dissonance, by its social divisions resulting from a migratory invasion that has been ignored for too long, and by economic growth that is too weak to meet the expectations of its people. It finds an African continent still in debt and entangled in local conflicts, uncontrolled demographic growth and endemic poverty. It finds the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), more ambitious than ever, boosted by their economic growth and the conviction that the time has come for a multipolar world and regional powers.

## UKRAINE, BRINGING PEACE IN 24 HOURS

To find out what we should expect, here is an overview of the new Trump administration's priorities in terms of international relations.

The first issue Donald Trump will tackle is the war in Ukraine. He promised to "bring peace in 24 hours". But he won't succeed. In 24 hours, he may be able to obtain a ceasefire and the opening of negotiations. This will at least silence the guns and pave the way for dialogue.

Donald Trump's words should never be taken literally. With him, excess and hyperbole are intended to capture the attention of his interlocutors.

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*"The world of 2025 is not the world of 2020. Trump had left a world at peace. He finds a world marked by two tragic and contagious conflicts."*

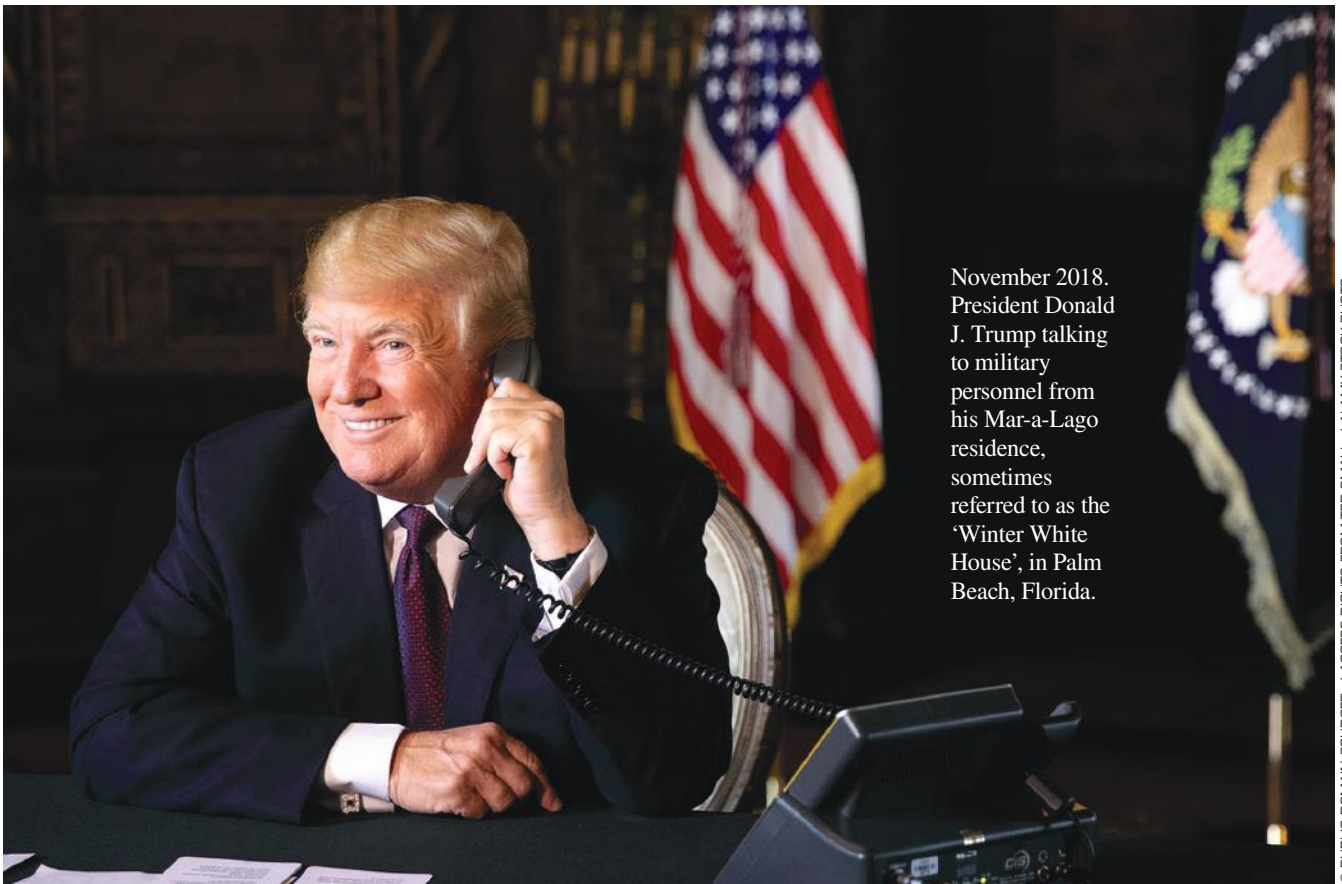
Gérald Olivier

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"Bringing peace in 24 hours" means three things: firstly, he is serious about his commitment; secondly, peace is possible; and thirdly, he has a plan!

A plan detailed during the US election campaign, which involves a freeze on positions on the ground and territorial concessions from Ukraine in exchange for security guarantees from the United States and Europe. Crimea will remain Russian (it was until 1954). Part of Donbass will become an autonomous province, or even be attached to Russia. A demilitarised zone will be created on the northern and eastern borders of Ukraine to prevent any further Russian invasion. NATO membership will be postponed for at least twenty years, in favour of temporary neutrality. A process of accession to the European Union may be initiated, and the United States and Europe will fund the country's reconstruction.

\*Franco-American journalist and author of numerous books on America, including *Sur la route de la Maison Blanche* (Editions Jean Piccollec) and *Cover Up, le clan Biden, l'Amérique et l'Etat profond* (Editions Konfident).



November 2018. President Donald J. Trump talking to military personnel from his Mar-a-Lago residence, sometimes referred to as the 'Winter White House', in Palm Beach, Florida.

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These are the broad outlines of the future peace treaty. They may evolve and the details will come later. General Keith Kellogg, a former National Security Advisor, has been appointed special envoy to Ukraine and Russia to handle this case. His mission will consist of bringing both sides to the negotiating table.

Volodymyr Zelenski, the Ukrainian president, will have no choice. He is too dependent on American aid to oppose Washington's wishes. After three years of war, he has also understood that Ukraine cannot win from a military point of view. As for Vladimir Putin, Trump intends to convince him that a refusal to negotiate would expose his country to increased sanctions and the strangulation of its economy. Russia currently spends 30% of its budget on defence, i.e. on the war in Ukraine. A staggering and unsustainable level... Trump will not force Putin to negotiate, but he will offer him the opportunity to avoid the collapse of his economy, and to emerge victorious, at least in the eyes of the Russian people.

### **BRINGING PEACE TO THE MIDDLE EAST**

The second priority will be the Middle East. This is a complex issue that includes the search for peace in Gaza and Lebanon as well as a solution to the Palestinian question. This involves using "a three-track diplomatic game", in other words involving Iran in the discussions, the main destabilising power in the region.

The most urgent issue will be the release of the hostages still held by Hamas. Nearly a hundred hostages, captured during the pogrom of 7 October 2023, are still being held by Hamas,

including seven American nationals. In a message published in early December on Truth Social, his social network, Donald Trump demanded their release 'before my inauguration', promising that otherwise "those responsible for these atrocities will pay a hell of a price".

At the same time, Donald Trump appointed Mike Huckabee, former governor of Arkansas and a fundamentalist Christian, as ambassador to Jerusalem. Huckabee has visited Israel many times and, because of his Protestant faith, shares many affinities with the Jewish people. Trump has also appointed Steven Witkoff as his special envoy to the Middle East. Witkoff is not a diplomat, but a real estate tycoon. But he is Jewish and knows Israel and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu very well.

Donald Trump's intention is to let Netanyahu 'finish the job', i.e. get rid of Hamas and Hezbollah. Unlike the Biden administration, which hampered the action of the Israeli defence forces by slowing down the delivery of weapons and munitions, Donald Trump will give Israel all the means necessary to fully eradicate the terrorist hotbeds in the region.

At the same time, Donald Trump will open a line of communication with Teheran to get them to stop providing assistance to Hamas and Hezbollah, and to convince the regime to give up its plans to acquire nuclear weapons.

Trump wants to bring peace to the Middle East, not open confrontation with Iran. But he is prepared to use the threat of confrontation to force his adversaries change their behaviours. Nor does he intend to overthrow the Islamic regime in Tehran. He has been too critical of the CIA's dirty tricks in the past to

embark on such an adventurism. But he does intend to put the Tehran devils back in their box.

In May 2018, Donald Trump slammed the door on the JCPOA – Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – an agreement on Iran's nuclear programme concluded between the Obama administration, Iran and the Europeans.

For him, this agreement was an open door to Iran acquiring an atomic bomb, a possible outcome that he categorically rejects. Trump will reaffirm his position on Teheran backing it up with tougher economic sanctions and adding specific threats, in other words targeted action against leading figures in the regime, as was the case in 2020 against General Soleimani. At the same time, he will hold out the prospect of all sanctions being lifted and of Iran being reintegrated into the regional economy if the regime finally gives up destabilising the region as it has been doing since its advent in 1979.

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*"The threat of a NATO exit has already been raised, even if it does not seem realistic."*

Gérald Olivier

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## CHINA: A LONG-TERM BATTLE

Over and above these two issues, which will have to be resolved quickly, Trump will be engaging China in a long-term battle.

Beijing's Communist China stands as the United States' main rival for global hegemony. A specific rival in that, despite opposing ideologies and systems – capitalism versus communism, democracy versus authoritarianism – the two countries are closely intertwined when it comes to trade.

China is the United States' third largest trading partner, after Canada and Mexico. Without Beijing, the shelves of American supermarkets, Walmarts and Target, would be, if not empty, at least stocked with much more expensive products. The US trade deficit with China is abyssal, almost four hundred billion dollars a year. The United States exports less than two hundred billion dollars and imports almost six hundred billion.

As a first step, Donald Trump will seek to reduce this deficit by introducing tariffs, "the most beautiful word in the dictionary of words" as he has repeatedly said.

The aim is threefold: to bring money into the State coffers, to protect American industries from unfair competition, and to encourage the Beijing authorities to balance the terms of trade. Because beyond the deficit, trade relations between the two countries are marked by inequalities that Trump wants to correct: respect for intellectual property, end of technology transfers, opening up of the Chinese market, and so on. There's a lot to correct. Trump will have the support of Congress on this issue. The entire American political class is united in its hostility to China's behaviour, with the possible

exception of the members of the Biden family, Joe included. On the issue of Taiwan, the Americans are divided. The hawks advocate for a strong commitment to protect the island. The others, including Donald Trump, are in favour of simple military assistance. Trump will encourage Taiwan's leaders to strengthen their defence by purchasing American equipment. The idea of equipping Taiwan with an anti-missile dome, the same used by Israel is a possibility.

At the same time, Trump will also be seeking to protect the US semiconductor industry from Taiwan's stranglehold on the sector. More than the question of a reunified China, it is the prospect of seeing the Taiwanese chip industry (which accounts for 60% of the world market) fall under Beijing's control that is likely to prompt the United States to intervene to block any reunification.

## EUROPE, MISTRUST AND DEMANDS

Donald Trump's approach to Europe is likely to be similar: the United States will continue to defend you, provided you do more to protect yourselves and show your gratitude to America. For Donald Trump, the Europeans are ungrateful and perhaps duplicitous allies. During his first term in office, he openly attacked Angela Merkel's Germany, pointing out that the United States was protecting the country against Russia within the framework of NATO, but that the Germans were obtaining their energy supplies, particularly natural gas, from Russia, the potential enemy against which the United States was supposed to be protecting them. And yet the United States is itself a producer and exporter of natural gas... There was a like a paradox here, not to say an abuse that simply wasn't acceptable. Not to mention the strategic risks of such dependence on Moscow. His vision has not changed. And events have shown that he was right...

More than ever, Donald Trump is therefore going to make American military aid conditional on the purchase of American military equipment and improved economic cooperation, particularly in the field of energy. On this last point, Europe, and Germany in particular, will have everything to gain.

The threat of a NATO exit has already been raised, even if it does not seem realistic. For Donald Trump, NATO is a bargaining chip. In the name of continued American leadership in this organisation, Donald Trump intends to obtain lower tariffs on American exports to Europe, and intends to negotiate on a country-by-country basis.

He may also ask European countries to align themselves with the United States in a less compliant approach to China.

Donald Trump does not like the European Union. He sees its leaders as unelected bureaucrats who spend most of their time devising regulations that hamper economic activity and growth. He will seek to open up the European market to American products, threatening tariffs on European exports to the United States. When it comes to digital communications, it is more than likely that Donald Trump, supported by Elon Musk (X), Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook) and now even Jeff Bezos (Amazon), will oppose the restrictions and controls that Brussels intend to introduce in this sector.



December 2018.  
Video conference  
on Christmas Day,  
from the Oval  
Office, with military  
personnel stationed  
in different parts of  
the world to thank  
them for their service  
to the nation.

*"Donald Trump  
intends to exercise  
on his own the role  
of commander-in-  
chief of the armed  
forces, which the  
Constitution reserves  
for him."*

**Gérald Olivier**



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*« The foreign policy of the Trump 2.0 administration  
will inevitably be full of surprises.*

Gérald Olivier

## **FAITHFUL COLLABORATORS**

To carry out this policy, Donald Trump has built up a team of faithful collaborators, most of whom share his vision of ‘peace through strength’, an age-old slogan revived by Ronald Reagan at the end of the Cold War.

The Secretary of State-designate is Marco Rubio, a senator from Florida. He is a former Republican presidential candidate, Cuban American, an ardent anti-communist and a supporter of a strong America. He could turn his attention to Latin America, particularly Venezuela, which has been ruined by the Chavista experiment.

At the Pentagon, the Department of Defence, Trump has appointed Peter Hegseth, a 44-year-old former Marine, whose mission will consist of cleaning up the army and eliminating the Wokism the Obama and Biden administrations allowed to infiltrate. Hegseth arrives with no experience in such a position which indicates that Donald Trump intends to exercise alone the role of Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, which the Constitution reserves for him.

As national security adviser, Trump has appointed Mike Waltz, a former elected official from Florida who earned a reputation in Congress for his intransigence towards China. This choice is a clear indication of Trump’s priorities and of his approach to the Chinese great rival in what some are already calling a ‘new Cold War’.

At the CIA, the President has appointed John Ratcliffe, who was already in charge of intelligence during Trump’s first

term. Ratcliffe is a man of experience and common sense, devoted to the cause of America First.

At the head of intelligence Donald Trump has appointed Tulsi Gabbard, a 43-year-old former National Guardswoman, Democratic Party defector, representative of Hawaii and Democratic candidate for the White House in 2020. Gabbard is a ‘non-interventionist’ who has vigorously criticised US involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. Like Trump. She has also openly opposed the ‘military-industrial complex’ and the ‘hawk’ lobby in Washington.

As ambassador to the United Nations, Donald Trump has chosen Elise Stefanik, a young representative from New York who went to Harvard University and who is totally committed to the America First cause. Her mission will consist of reminding the defenders of world government that if you want to sit at the top table, you have to have the means to back up your words... In other words, the United States wants to be respected within this body, of which it alone finances a quarter of the budget.

Finally, we should note that Donald Trump's most favoured diplomatic tool, after tariffs, is unpredictability. Keeping his interlocutor in a state of uncertainty as to the nature of the next move he will make is essential to encourage him to be cautious. This is a recognised principle of the ‘art of negotiation’, in which Trump believes he excels. The foreign policy of the Trump 2.0 administration will inevitably be full of surprises. ■

Interview with **James G. Foggo**, Admiral U.S. Navy (Ret.),  
Dean of the Center for maritime strategy\*



© DR

## "President Trump has understood the need for a powerful navy consisting of 355 vessels."

Interview by **Bertrand de Lesquen**

### What do you think Donald Trump's strategic priorities will be?

I think that President-elect Trump will focus on making America stronger both economically and militarily. The world relies on the U.S. dollar as a stable currency. Economic stability does not happen without national security to ensure that government institutions, banks, and borders—both land and maritime—remain secure. In my nearly 44 years in uniform, I have never seen as many threats on the horizon to America and her Allies. That said, American military spending has approached record levels of \$1 trillion, contributing to America's national debt which represents a significant threat in and of itself. Spending must be brought under control, so Americans can expect cuts in discretionary domestic spending and potentially a reduction in some operations overseas with a bias towards the Indo-Pacific. Allies and partners will be expected to do more. This is no surprise as during his first term, President Trump pushed NATO Allies to meet their 2% commitment to the Alliance. This had a positive effect on Allied contributions and NATO's ability to invest in the future. Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg championed those members of the Alliance who reached 2% and encouraged the rest to follow. I suspect that President Trump will resurrect the subject of burden sharing again in 2025, but this time contributing 2% of GDP will just be the floor. Nations will be encouraged to do even more than that in the next Trump administration.

### What role will the sea and the Navy play in the new president's foreign policy?

America is an island nation. The founding fathers of the U.S. Constitution codified the requirement to "maintain" a Navy and "raise" and Army to meet the nation's security needs. President Trump identified the need for a strong

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*"Although the United States Navy's end strength has been reduced to 300 warships, America still has about 100 warships underway on any given day."*

Admiral James G. Foggo

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Navy during his first term and concurred with plans to build a fleet of 355 ships. The Navy fell well short of this goal due to a variety of reasons including the long-term impact of COVID, rising inflation, labor market shortages, and supply chain issues. In the hiatus of four years since last occupying the Oval Office, President Trump will likely want to know why the

\*Admiral (Ret.) James G. Foggo commanded the SNA USS Oklahoma City, the Submarine Squadron 6 in Norfolk, Virginia, the Submarine Group 8, the Allied Submarines South, the US 6th Fleet, the NATO Allied Strike and Support Forces, the Naval Forces in Europe, the Naval Forces in Africa and the Allied Joint Forces Command (NATO). A graduate of the United States Naval Academy (1981), he holds a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University and a postgraduate diploma in defence and strategic studies from the University of Strasbourg. A fluent French speaker, Admiral Foggo is a member of the American Academy of Diplomacy.

**Further informations:** Center for Maritime Strategy website: <https://centerformaritimestrategy.org/>  
and Navy League website: <https://www.navyleague.org/>





November 2024. The USS *Minnesota* (SSN 783), a Virginia-class nuclear attack submarine, enters the U.S. Naval Base at Guam. The first of this class to be deployed there, she joins the four Los Angeles-class nuclear attack submarines already positioned in the Pacific.

© U.S. NAVY

Navy did not meet this goal. I think he will find, as many (besides me) have written, that America’s industrial base has been outsourced over the last forty years during the aspirational period of “globalization.” As we just learned, in response to the threat of tariffs, China has now restricted export of gallium, germanium, and antimony, all dual use materials with military applications. Accordingly, I suspect that one of the goals of the next Trump administration will be to rebuild and fortify America’s industrial base, reducing the United States’ dependency on outside influencers when it comes to manufacturing, with a particular focus on shipbuilding.

**In what condition is the US Navy at the start of Donald Trump's second term?**

The United States Navy is performing well in its mission of power projection. In the last year, four aircraft carrier strike groups deployed to the Eastern Mediterranean or the Middle East in response to the war between Israel and Hamas and the protracted conflict between the Axis of Resistance (Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis, Iran) and Western Allies in the Red Sea and the broader Middle East. Moreover, two of the Carrier Strike Groups rapidly redeployed from the Pacific to the Middle East, underscoring the Navy’s exceptional ability to respond rapidly to crisis. It is often said that when a crisis that

impacts U.S. national security or our interests somewhere in the world, the first question that an American President will ask is: “Where are the carriers?”

Although the United States Navy’s end strength has been reduced to 300 warships, America still has about 100 warships underway on any given day. This has created challenges to maintain readiness and modernization of the force because of longer deployments and pressurization of our shipyards to do more work with limited resources. For example, at least two of the Carrier Strike Group deployments to the Middle East (USS *Gerald R. Ford* and USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower*) were extended from seven to nine months at sea!

One might therefore question whether longer deployments have impacted the performance of our ships at sea or the retention of our Sailors. Regarding performance, the warfighting skills of our ships deployed in the Red Sea has been unmatched. We have maintained a continuous presence in the region since shortly after the Hamas attack on Israel. U.S. Navy DDG’s have knocked down hundreds of ballistic or cruise missiles and drones aimed at commercial ships or warships and the state of Israel. I am concerned however, that while tactical performance of our ships has been nothing short of superb, the current Administration’s strategy in the Red Sea has been a failure and by that, I mean a political failure and NOT a military failure, due to the reluctance to strike hard

at the source of the problem. The passage from the Bab-al-Mandab to the Suez Canal is high risk for commercial ship transit and many major shipping lines, like Maersk, choose to go around the Cape of Good Hope, adding more transit time and higher fuels costs that are passed on to the consumer. Meanwhile, the Houthis have become a household name and continue to do the bidding of the Islamic Republic of Iran. While there are many competing priorities, I believe that stopping the Axis of Resistance will be high on the list of the incoming Trump administration.

*"Allies and partners will be expected to do more."*

Admiral James G. Foggo

### What are the U.S. Navy's ambitions, and what are the major priority programs currently underway?

Admiral Lisa Franchetti, Chief of Naval Operations, recently released her Navigation Plan 2024<sup>1</sup> which underscores support for Warfighters, Warfighting and the foundation<sup>2</sup> that supports them. Furthermore, CNO announced a plan that includes seven core fleet readiness targets under Project 33, a reference to Franchetti serving as the 33<sup>rd</sup> CNO. Those targets include:

- Ready the force by eliminating ship, submarine, and aircraft maintenance delays.
- Scale robotic and autonomous systems to integrate more platforms at speed.
- Create the command centers our fleets need to win on a distributed battlefield.
- Recruit and retain the force we need to get more players on the field.
- Deliver a quality of service commensurate with the sacrifices of our sailors.
- Train for combat as we plan to fight, in the real world and virtually.
- Restore the critical infrastructure that sustains and projects the fight from shore.

I believe that the CNO has identified an appropriate set of goals but achieving them will take time, perseverance, and an abundance of resources. The good news is that the first

1 - The plan is based on two strategic objectives: readiness for conflict with the People's Republic of China by 2027, and building long-term advantage. It aims to achieve these objectives through two main means: the implementation of seven 'Project 33' objectives (read above) and the expansion of the warfighting ecosystem. Source US Navy.

2 - "Admiral Lisa Franchetti uses this term to refer to all the infrastructure and players needed to support the Navy on operations. This includes bases in the United States and abroad, shipyards for maintenance and logistics... Not forgetting, of course, the families who look after the homes while the sailors are at sea. This metaphor evokes the foundations of a building or a house. You can't run a fleet without a solid foundation". Admiral (Ret.) James G. Foggo.



October 2024.  
The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier  
USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75)  
during a replenishment at sea  
with the support ship USNS *Arctic*  
(T-AOE 8).

service secretary named by President-elect Trump is the prospective Secretary of the Navy, Mr. John Phelan. Furthermore, Mr. Phelan is an accomplished businessman and he will need to bring his business acumen into the Pentagon to assist the Navy with the enormity of the seven tasks articulated above.

**Admiral Lisa Franchetti, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Navy, has called for the Navy to be fully operational in 2027 for a possible confrontation with China. However, many observers believe that the Navy, and more broadly the U.S. Army, is outmatched by Beijing's determination and speed in developing its navy and army. What do you think?**

Admiral Franchetti has a solid plan to rise to the challenges in the Indo-Pacific. She was the keynote speaker for my Center for Maritime Strategy's annual America's Future Fleet conference earlier this week. She told the audience that she has a "countdown clock" in her office that is counting down the days until January 1, 2027. This is because 2027 is the timeframe that Chinese President Xi has ordered the People's Liberation Army and Navy to be ready for war.

NAVPLAN 2024 is intended to raise our Fleet's baseline level of readiness and put more ready Players on the Field... platforms that are ready with the requisite capabilities, weapons, and sustainment and people that are ready with the right mindset, skills, tools, and training.

The CNO intends to do that by implementing the key areas that we need to accelerate by 2027 ... areas like achieving 80% combat surge readiness, operationally integrating robotic and autonomous systems, and restoring critical infrastruc-



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*"It is often said that when a crisis that impacts U.S. national security or our interests somewhere in the world, the first question that an American President will ask is: Where are the carriers?"*

Admiral James G. Foggo

ture in order to maximize the Navy’s ability to mitigate the risk of conflict in the Indo-Pacific.

I often hear naval leaders in Indo-Pacific state that their goal is to ensure that when President Xi Jing Ping awakens every day and examines a chart of the Indo-Pacific, he declares: “Today is not the day...”

Implementing NAVPLAN 2024 and Project 33 will contribute to that goal.

**This confrontation between the USA and China seems to have been programmed... Is it avoidable?**

This question reminds me of one of my former professors, Dr. Graham Allison, at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. Graham popularized the theory of the “Thucydides Trap” in his book entitled: *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides’ Trap?* The Thucydides Trap occurs when a rising power

challenges an existing hegemon leading to the inevitability of war. The two belligerents in Allison’s book are the United States and China.

Most who are knowledgeable of the military capabilities of both the United States and China understand that any conflict between the two powers would be devastating for the world and the world economy. I do not think that war is inevitable, however, in order to deter war with China, America and her allies must remain strong in all aspects of Diplomatic, Informational, Military, or Economic (DIME) power. Furthermore, dialog must continue between Chinese and American leadership. President Joe Biden had more contact time with President Xi than any other President since they both served as Vice President and Vice Premier before assuming the top leadership roles in their respective countries. Bottom Line Up Front: Continue the dialog!

**How do you analyze the Franco-American relationship - national and naval - and what should it be during Donald Trump's term of office?**

I see the Franco-American relationship – national and naval – as extremely strong. President Macron enjoyed a good relationship with President Joe Biden. While President-elect Trump and President Macron may not agree on all the issues, they have history together and I believe each man understands the other. Furthermore, in a gesture of good will, President Macron invited President-elect Trump to come to the official opening ceremony of Cathedral Notre Dame. Brilliant move on the part of the President of the Republic--a little diplomacy goes a long way!

On the Navy side, our relationship could not be better. I am a Francophone, educated at the *University Robert Schuman* in Strasbourg and I speak the language. During my career, I depended on many distinguished French naval officers for collaboration in real world operations and exercises involving both of our navies. This list includes RADM Cedric Chetaille, VADM Christian Canova, VADM Eric Chaperon, VADM Yves Joly, VADM Charles Henri Du Che, and Admiral Christophe Prazuck. Furthermore, I have met Admiral Pierre Vandier, the current Commander of Supreme Allied Command Transformation (SAC-T) in Norfolk, VA, and I find him to be one of the most strategic thinkers that I have ever met. I once presented VADM Chaperon with a belated U.S. Navy Meritorious Unit Citation for his deployment on FS *Charles de Gaulle*, during a deployment to the Arabian Gulf, when there was NO American carrier present. Furthermore, during the strikes on ISIS from the Eastern Mediterranean, VADM Charles Henri Du Che and I alternated provision of collective defense for the French Carrier or American Carriers in the Eastern Mediterranean. Overall, I think that the greatest advantage that we have in the West are our friends and allies. We must continue to work together to that end and I think the Franco-American Navy-Navy relationship is a shining example of that cooperation. ■



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# Make the Navy great

A second Trump administration should focus on rebuilding American seapower<sup>1</sup>.

By **Samuel Byers\***

Donald Trump decisively won the 2024 presidential election, returning him to office on January 20th, 2025 after a four-year absence. While national security and foreign policy are rarely front-of-mind issues for American voters, commentators drew sharp contrasts between Trump and his opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris on key foreign policy issues. When Trump is inaugurated for the second time in January, he will face a more challenging foreign policy environment than he did when he first assumed office in 2017. However, he will have the opportunity to make a mark on American foreign policy that extends well beyond the next four years. Trump and his running mate, Ohio Senator and former U.S. Marine J.D. Vance, have both found themselves at odds with the DC foreign policy establishment throughout their political careers. Key points of divergence include the former American mission in Afghanistan, U.S. obligations to NATO, and Washington's response to the ongoing war in Ukraine. An overriding theme for both men has been the need to "end endless wars" and pursue a foreign policy that is more narrowly tailored to American national interests. However, both men have advocated for a military posture that can be described as one of "peace through strength."

In his possible second term, Trump will have the opportunity to cement his foreign policy legacy and shape the course of American national security policy well beyond the next four years. The key to doing so is for the White House to elevate naval power to a privileged place in American defense strategy and to back a crash investment program in the U.S. Navy, Merchant Marine, and other sea services to prepare the country for twenty-first century great power competition with the People's Republic of China (PRC) and our other adversaries. Trump's own foreign policy instincts are well-served by naval power; additionally, a major program of

naval and commercial maritime construction would be well-aligned with the Trump-Vance ticket's avowed desire to promote American manufacturing and reindustrialize the United States. Most importantly, by upsetting the balance of power between the military services, a second Trump administration can disrupt the business-as-usual status quo inside the Pentagon and future-proof its foreign policy against successors – left or right – who wish to revert to a more interventionist model of U.S. foreign policy.

On January 20, 2025, the members of a second Trump administration will face a vastly different – and more dangerous – landscape than did their predecessors eight years before. The United States is no longer in Afghanistan. Still, across the Middle East, an Iran unshackled by the Biden administration does battle with Israel, our other allies, and U.S. forces via its network of terrorist proxies. Trump's efforts to goad NATO members into meeting their defense spending commitments have been vindicated now that Russia and Ukraine are locked in the longest, deadliest European war in eight decades. The threat from China looms ever larger in the Far East as the PRC bullies U.S. treaty allies by sea, continues to build its navy (now the largest in the world), and keeps Taiwan firmly in the crosshairs. Rather than rising to meet this challenge head-on, the Biden administration has repeatedly requested de facto cuts to the defense budget when accounting for inflation.

1 - This article was published in *The National Interest* in October 2024, one month before Donald Trump was re-elected President of the United States. In view of its topical nature on what Donald Trump's maritime policy could be, *Marine & Oceans* has chosen, with the explicit agreement of its author, who updated it after the official results, to share it with its readers for their own analysis. Visit the National Interest website: [www.nationalinterest.org](http://www.nationalinterest.org)

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May 2018. End of the graduation ceremony for the 2018 class of the Annapolis Naval Academy. The leading US naval academy, located in Maryland, graduated 1,042 cadets that year in the presence of then President Donald Trump. *'The new president will have to give naval power a privileged place in American defence strategy.'* **Samuel Byers**

*"Naval power is the ideal tool for managing multiple threats in an increasingly chaotic world."*

Samuel Byers

### THE IMPORTANCE OF NAVAL POWER

Among U.S. foreign policy professionals –especially those on the right– there exists a growing concern that the United States no longer possesses the military superiority to tackle all challenges in all theaters at all times. Rather, we will have to prioritize between theaters and offload lesser responsibilities onto allies wherever possible. Naval power (including not only the Navy and Marine Corps but also the oft-overlooked Coast Guard and Merchant Marine) is the ideal tool for managing multiple threats in an increasingly chaotic world. Unlike forward-deployed land or air forces, which require local basing rights and a heavy troop footprint, American naval forces can operate from the high seas anywhere in the world and can rapidly pivot between regions and missions as circumstances require.

The Navy's ongoing mission in the Red Sea is a perfect case in point: multiple carrier strike groups have redeployed from other theaters to counter the threat to global shipping from Tehran's Houthi proxies. Naval power offers decision-makers

in Washington maximal flexibility to counter critical threats. However, decades of underinvestment mean that demand for naval forces outstrips supply.

Moreover, growing American naval power is essential to tackling the principal foreign policy challenge of the twenty-first century. China remains intent on supplanting the United States as the world's foremost military and economic power. To do so, Beijing has spent decades building the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), which has surpassed the U.S. Navy in number of vessels and eclipses the United States in naval production capacity. At the same time, China has seized the commanding heights of the global maritime industry, establishing dominant positions in global shipbuilding, port operations, and cargo transport. Each of these capabilities –commercial as well as military– offers leverage over the United States and its allies in peace as well as war. The United States, meanwhile, has neglected its commercial maritime industry for decades, allowing naval shipbuilding to stagnate. A major course correction is urgently needed if

the United States is going to effectively compete against the adversary that Trump's first National Security Strategy identified as America's principal rival.

Not only is naval power essential to America's twenty-first-century national security needs, but it also fits Donald Trump's personal foreign policy preferences well. Throughout his first term, Trump's approach to the use of military force favored decisive strikes against discrete targets over open-ended, large-footprint military operations. The airstrike that killed Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commander Qasem Soleimani and the special forces raid that eliminated

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*"If the U.S. Army and Air Force were to quit the Eurasian mainland tomorrow, the Navy and Marine Corps would retain the capability to exert American influence ashore."*

Samuel Byers

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Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi epitomize this preference. Even when they are carried out by land and air forces, these sorts of operations are properly understood as terrestrial extensions of an American grand strategy predicated on absolute control of the seas. Moreover, if the U.S. Army and Air Force were to quit the Eurasian mainland tomorrow, the Navy and Marine Corps would retain the capability to exert American influence ashore in a similar manner. Although the Biden administration has failed to identify a clear goal for the mission in the Red Sea, the U.S. Navy's ongoing deployment showcases the flexibility and potency of naval forces to counter American adversaries like Iran and its proxies without the kind of large-footprint military deployments to which Trump has shown himself to be averse.

On the strategic level, prioritizing naval power over land and air forces complements a U.S. grand strategy that emphasizes burden-sharing with America's allies and elevates trade and commerce to a privileged place in foreign policymaking. Without abandoning NATO, it is important to continue to insist that America's European allies invest in their own terrestrial security—building up American naval forces as our allies invest in their air and ground forces would be mutually beneficial.

In Asia, the allies we rely on to help confront our primary adversary, China, are all islands or littoral states. The seas are the sinews that knit together the anti-China coalition. There is no coalition without American naval power in that region. Finally, China is growing in maritime might—in terms of its Navy as well as its merchant marine, maritime militia, and



critical role in global commercial supply chains. All of these assets give China leverage in commercial disputes – and trade wars – with the United States. A muscular counter-China trade policy will only be helped by rebuilding America's dilapidated commercial maritime fleet and infrastructure.

### **THE NEED TO INVEST IN NAVAL AND CIVIL SHIPBUILDING**

A program to “Make the Navy Great Again” would require investments in two areas. First, a sustained warship construction program will grow the size of the fleet to meet the global threat. Second, a program to revitalize the shipyards, supply chains, workforce, and the Merchant Marine that supports U.S. naval and military forces in wartime – and the U.S. economy in peacetime. Political support exists for these proposals on Capitol Hill, offering a second Trump administration an opportunity for an early win on a key national security issue. The likely next chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee should Republicans retake the majority, Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS), has long championed increasing defense investment to return closer to Cold War-era spending levels. In particular, he has voiced support for major defense industrial base investmentsto in-



Atlantic Ocean, November 2024. Aircraft assigned to the Blue Knights of the Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 365 on exercise with the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1).

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crease America’s capacity to build warships and aircraft. In the House, Representative Mike Waltz (R-FL) introduced legislation this year aimed at revitalizing the country’s commercial maritime industry, including those components supporting military sealift and American economic security. Waltz is part of a bipartisan, bicameral group of legislators who called for a comprehensive U.S. maritime strategy earlier this year; more developments on this front are likely in the new Congress.

The common denominator between both lines of effort would be a multi-year, multi-billion-dollar investment in American industry. Money spent on warships and shipyards is not confined to a few coastal communities. The supply chains for the largest, most complex objects humans build stretch far and wide as suppliers source components and raw materials from firms across the country. Since his first campaign for president, Trump has bemoaned the loss of American manufacturing jobs and championed the reindustrialization of the United States, themes on which he doubled down with his choice of Vance as his running mate. Executed correctly by an engaged White House and Pentagon, complimentary naval and commercial maritime initiatives would amount to a nationwide program of investment

into America’s manufacturing sector and the blue-collar workforce that operates it. Efforts are already underway to recruit 100,000 tradespeople over the next decade to work in America’s submarine industrial base.

### DISRUPTING THE STATUS QUO WITHIN THE PENTAGON

Finally – and most interestingly – a concerted, four-year campaign to rebuild American naval power offers an opportunity to upset the status quo within the Pentagon and alter the bureaucratic balance of power between the military services in ways that resonate far beyond the next presidential term. Historically, the Army, Air Force, and Navy (inclusive of the Marine Corps) Departments claim roughly equal shares of the annual defense budget. Shifting that ratio in favor of the sea services – either by reassigning existing funds or disproportionately allocating new defense spending – will enhance the Navy Secretary’s position in the perennial battle for budget and influence inside the Pentagon. Deliberately reducing or eliminating certain Army and Air Force missions and programs to reallocate funding to enhancing naval power would send a powerful message to the Pentagon’s entrenched bureaucracy about political leadership’s vision for American defense priorities going forward.

From the 1949 “Revolt of the Admirals” down to the multi-decade ground wars of the early twenty-first century, the Pentagon’s bureaucratic culture has been dominated by the Army and its stalwart ally, the Air Force. Putting the thumb on the scale in favor of the Navy and Marine Corps by increasing their resources and providing clear, consistent political direction in their favor would upset the comfortable status quo within the federal government’s largest bureaucracy.

Insofar as budgets and influence can be permanently shifted away from the air-land cartel and toward the sea services, a second Trump administration can reshape the options and professional military advice available to its successors, limiting the ability of a future president to pursue the kind of interventionist foreign policy Trump campaigned against. If the goal is to “end endless wars,” the sea services should be *primus inter pares* when it comes to advising a future president on military issues. It is generals, after all, who tend to tell political leadership that using the United States’ exquisite military to invade a landlocked country on the far side of the world is going to be quick and easy; admirals, by and large, do not. Naval power is the right tool to confront America’s mounting national security challenges, and making it central to U.S. defense policy would complement other priorities on the Trump platform. If re-elected, President Trump should take a page from the book of past Republican navalist presidents – Roosevelt and Reagan – and make rebuilding America’s sea services a priority of his second term. Who knows: one day, the USS Donald J. Trump might join those presidents’ namesake warships at the head of a carrier strike group. ■



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# An urgent American maritime agenda for 2025

By **Brent D. Sadler\***

In recent months enemies of Western liberal democracies have been waging an aggressive onslaught in Ukraine thru the Middle East to East Asia. Their actions are made more urgent with the knowledge that a forceful new administration is coming to Washington, D.C. That said, the path ahead remains uncertain and dangerous, but one that can be made more secure with a focus on maritime strength.

In the book *U.S. Naval Power in the 21st Century*<sup>1</sup>, a keen awareness of Russia's and China's strategic calculus informs the conclusion that to deter these foes: leverage sea-power. In fact, it also is the best way ahead in galvanizing allies in common cause, while attracting partner nations sharing a common interest in free and open commerce. This will not come cheap and will challenge the conventional thinking in Washington.

Top of the agenda will be operating a too limited naval force in new ways that signals a changed approach to confronting China in Asia. This draws heavily from the experiences of *Ocean Venture* – a naval exercise begun in 1981 that signaled to the Soviet Union a willingness and capacity to operate naval forces in what had been till then a Soviet bastion in the far north. Intelligence briefings before Congress told the story how the Soviets were setback by such operations, resulting in Congress funding President Reagan's naval rebuilding to a fleet of six hundred warships.

Today more modest goals are often proposed and should be viewed only as a downpayment on a longer-term effort to wage today's new Cold War. Action, however, cannot be deferred, and so the next administration will need to act with urgency<sup>2</sup>. Sadly, our foes have not been idle making time a commodity that is in too short supply making effective naval operations in the near-term an imperative. This can buy time and space for the new administration to begin the effort to rebuild today's U.S. Navy.

## THE COST OF THIRTY YEARS OF PEACE DIVIDENDS

After 30-years of neglect and a culture of efficiencies over effectiveness, the U.S. Navy and its supporting industry has atrophied to a dangerous state. The 30-year peace dividend cost the Navy over \$1.2 trillion dollars in deferred investments that has shuttered too many shipyards, bankrupted maritime industry, and hollowed out of the nation's experienced maritime workforce. Turning this around will require a national effort that includes revitalizing a noncompetitive maritime commercial industry and attracting investment to recapitalize waterfront communities across the nation. America's Congress is on the cusp of introducing legislation –Ships for America Act– to begin this effort and support the incoming administration on this task. In the near future, the Navy will need to staunch the hemorrhaging of warships, sailors, and shipyard workers. This will require two things: One, a return to mission and core principles. Two, gaining the funding to stop early retirement and idling of warships with service life remaining. Addressing the easier step first –keeping ships in the fleet with service life. This will require support from Congress to fund the added cost of retaining – perhaps in reduced

1 - *U.S. Naval Power in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A New Strategy for Facing the Chinese and Russian Threat* by Brent Droste Sadler - Naval Institute Press - May 2023.

2 - This article was written on December 2, 2024.



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October 2024, the US carrier strike group USS along with the aircraft carrier USS *Harry S. Truman*, seen from the bridge of the missile cruiser USS *Gettysburg*, in transit towards the North Sea.

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operational status – warships like the Littoral Combat Ship and Expeditionary Transfer Dock ships with over ten years of service life left. And submarines like the aging *Ohio*-class strategic missile and guided missile variants will need to be extended beyond nominal service life too; that is until replacements of the Columbia-class arrive. This decision is inescapable given the nuclear threat from China, which has in recent years massively expanded, tripling its ICBM arsenal and developing new types of weapons like the fractional orbital bombardment system.

### GETTING BACK THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE NAVY

More challenging, but just as critical, is changing a culture of distraction from naval mission and core principles. Top of this agenda will be expunging the divisive and detrimental policies associated with Marxist inspired Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI). Naval service is first and foremost a technologically centered profession where knowledge and competency must be foremost in assessing sailors and officers for promotion and assignment to critical positions. DEI has instead prioritized identity over competency and in so doing alienated many, with recruitment suffering historically low numbers. This has only recently reversed after the Navy began relenting from its overtly DEI inspired recruit-

ing campaigns, employing at times drag queen influencers amongst others.

It is an encouraging sign to see the newly re-elected President Trump has recently named his Secretary of the Navy<sup>3</sup>; a position too often deferred until late into new administrations. In fact, it was only in the final year of President Biden’s term that the full politically appointed navy team was in place – this is unacceptable given the dangers in today’s world and the need for action to rebuild America’s Navy. As such, given the early naming of a new Secretary, there is reason to hope this will not be repeated and the Navy will be given the leadership needed to make course corrections – hopefully like those listed here.

Finally, for too long America has not invested resources or political capital in its maritime or navy. Given failing deterrence around the world, evident by Putin’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine and Chinese increasingly violent provocations in Asia, a strong naval presence is required. This is not America acting alone, as was made clear during President Trump’s first term, but a tangible commitment to America’s interests shared with willing allies. This delivered results before and can return the world to a more peaceful time. ■

3 - At the time this issue went to press, in mid-December 2024, it was John Pehlman.



## L'Océan, la planète, la Chine et... nous !

## The ocean, the planet, China and... us!

Par / By **Francis Vallat** de l'Académie de Marine,  
Fondateur et président d'honneur des clusters maritimes français et européen /  
Member of the French *Académie de Marine*, Founder and Honorary  
Chairman of the French and European maritime clusters

Revenant d'un déplacement en Chine au début 2019, j'avais rappelé dans ces colonnes les chiffres colossaux du développement des flottes militaires chinoises de surface et sous-marine, en mentionnant que leur croissance vertigineuse soulevait d'inquiétantes questions. D'autant que se télescopent des opinions contradictoires, entre d'un côté la volonté chinoise affichée de ne pas renoncer au multilatéralisme ou au dialogue, et de l'autre, par exemple, la « gestulation » militaire toujours aussi active en mer de Chine (transformation de récifs en îles artificielles équipées de ports et de pistes d'aviation), et fondée apparemment sur une analyse détachée du droit international (« *Cette mer est à nous, elle ne s'appelle pas Mer de Chine par hasard !* »).

J'avais évoqué l'analyse selon laquelle cette marine militaire puissante correspond "légitimement", en tout cas sans surprise à l'aune de l'Histoire, à la puissance économique majeure (la deuxième du monde aujourd'hui !) qu'est devenue la Chine. Puissance dont l'une des clefs est précisément l'activité commerciale maritime, alliée à la conviction sans cesse affirmée du gouvernement chinois que la mer est aussi bien l'avenir de la terre que du pays lui-même. Avec naturellement la stratégie qui en découle dans tous les domaines : développement de la marine marchande et des ports de commerce chinois, ambition et réalisation des nouvelles routes de la soie, achats de ports et de réseaux logistiques terrestres étrangers, protection militaire des grandes routes maritimes indispensables aux importations de minerais et d'hydrocarbures et aux exportations de produits finis. Et finalement validation d'un constat, repris en boucle par différents observateurs : « *La sécurisation des flux maritimes est vitale pour la Chine et c'est pour cette raison que ses forces navales ont commencé à se déployer, à participer aux opérations de lutte contre la piraterie, puis maintenu et accru leur présence en océan Indien* ». Selon cette analyse, il

Returning from a visit to China in early 2019, I wrote in these columns about the massive expansion of China's surface and submarine military fleets, and how their vertiginous growth raised a number of worrying questions. Especially since contradictory opinions seem to be colliding, between, on the one hand, China's desire not to give up on multilateralism or dialogue and, on the other, for example, its ever-active military 'gesture' in the China Sea (converting reefs into artificial islands with ports and airstrips), apparently based on a disconnected analysis of international law ('This sea is ours, it's not called the China Sea by coincidence!').

I suggested that this powerful navy 'legitimately' - or at least unsurprisingly, in the light of history - matched the status of major economic power (the second largest in the world today!) of the country. A power notably driven by maritime trade, combined with the Chinese government's unwavering belief that the sea is not only the future of the Earth, but also of the country itself. And, of course, the strategy that follows in all areas: development of the merchant navy and China's commercial ports, the ambition and completion of the new Silk Roads, the acquisition of foreign ports and land-based logistics networks, the military protection of the major maritime routes that are vital for imports of minerals and hydrocarbons and exports of finished products.

And ultimately the confirmation of a statement, repeated over and over again by different observers: 'Making maritime flows safer is vital for China and this is the reason why its naval forces began to deploy and take part in counter-piracy operations, and then maintained and increased their presence in the Indian Ocean'. In this view, this would be a 'natural'





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Qingdao, dans la province de Shandong, troisième port à conteneurs du pays et quatrième mondial. Pilier du maritime chinois. / Qingdao, in Shandong province, the third largest container port in the country and the fourth largest in the world. A pillar of China's maritime industry.

s'agirait d'une évolution « naturelle », conforme à la marche logique et toujours observée des grandes puissances quelles qu'elles soient (voir le lien constant fait par l'étude *Océanides*<sup>1</sup> entre prospérité et puissance militaire pendant cinq siècles, dont l'Angleterre au XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle, et surtout les Etats-Unis au XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle, l'US Navy représentant encore en tonnage près de trois fois la flotte chinoise<sup>2</sup>). Et comment ne pas se référer à l'Histoire de la Chine impériale du XI<sup>ème</sup> au XV<sup>ème</sup> siècles, en rappelant qu'avant de se replier sur le « Milieu », la Chine fut la plus grande nation maritime du monde (en fait jusqu'à ce que les derniers empereurs Ming ordonnent le repli). On pense aux énormes flottes chinoises, celles du fameux amiral Zheng He, par exemple, protégeant (déjà !) le commerce des produits manufacturés chinois – porcelaine, soieries, quincailleries de fer et de cuivre – vendus dans toute l'Asie et jusqu'aux confins de l'Afrique. Les flottes allaient alors jusqu'à mille navires (il y

development, in line with the logical and consistent evolution of all great powers (cf. the consistent link established by the study *Océanides*<sup>1</sup> between prosperity and military power over five centuries, including England in the nineteenth century, and above all the United States in the twentieth century, with the US Navy that still represents nearly three times the tonnage of the Chinese fleet<sup>2</sup>).

And what about the history of imperial China from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries, remembering that before retreating to the 'Middle', China was the world's greatest maritime nation (in fact, until the last Ming emperors ordered the retreat). Just think of the huge Chinese fleets, those of the famous Admiral Zheng He, for example, protecting (already!) the trade in Chinese manufactured goods - porcelain, silks, iron and copper hardware - sold throughout Asia and to the farthest regions of Africa. At the time, the

1 - Étudier l'histoire maritime de l'Antiquité à nos jours, telle a été l'ambition du projet *Océanides*. Mené sous la direction scientifique de Christian Buchet, *Océanides* a réuni 260 chercheurs, issus de 40 pays, dont le travail a permis de donner une vision nouvelle des océans, de réévaluer leur importance dans l'histoire de nos civilisations et d'éclairer notre avenir. Ce travail unique a été regroupé en quatre volumes publiés aux éditions Boydell & Brewer. Pour en savoir plus, lire la *Brève Marine* n°199 - mars 2017 - du Centre d'études stratégiques de la Marine (CESM).

2 - Le rapport est, peu ou prou, de 4,5 millions de tonnes pour l'US Navy contre plus de 1,5 millions de tonnes pour la marine chinoise, la différence étant principalement faite par les porte-avions, 11 pour l'US Navy – dont le plus grand du monde, le USS *Gerald Ford*, 333 mètres, plus de 100 000 tonnes –, contre 3 pour la Marine chinoise.

1 - Studying maritime history from Antiquity to the present day was the ambition of the *Océanides* project. Conducted under the scientific direction of Christian Buchet, *Océanides* involved 260 researchers from 40 countries, whose work provided a new vision of the oceans, reassessed their importance in the history of our civilisations and shed light on our future. This unique work has been brought together in four volumes published by Boydell & Brewer. To learn more, read *Brève Marine* n°199 - March 2017 - from the French Navy's Centre for Strategic Studies (CESM).

2 - The ratio is, more or less, 4.5 million tonnes for the US Navy compared with more than 1.5 million tonnes for the Chinese Navy, the difference being due mainly to the aircraft carriers, 11 for the US Navy - including the largest in the world, the USS *Gerald Ford*, 333 metres long and weighing more than 100,000 tonnes - compared with 3 for the Chinese Navy.

en eut même une de trois mille !) transportant couramment de trente à cent mille hommes : équipages, soldats, ingénieurs, interprètes, embarqués sur des centaines de jonques de 140 mètres de long, des navires de tous types et même des cuirassés. Il est d'ailleurs notable que, dès l'an 1010, les Chinois avaient inventé la boussole, et conçu des navires à caissons étanches (près de neuf siècles avant l'Occident...).

Et puis il y a l'autre analyse, bien différente ! Celle qui souligne que les Chinois sont maintenant systématiquement actifs dans le monde entier, qu'ils ont accordé et accordent partout de multiples financements à toutes sortes d'acteurs maritimes, dans la logistique et les ports on le sait, mais aussi dans l'océanographie, la pêche, l'aquaculture, tandis qu'ils envoient en zone polaire des brise-glaces nucléaires etc... Tout ceci prouvant à l'envi que la Chine aurait commencé une deuxième « longue marche » à caractère nettement hégémonique, en s'appuyant sur son immense poids intrinsèque, ses énormes moyens et son organisation politico-économique centralisée, armes redoutables lui promettant de devenir le leader futur d'un monde au multilatéralisme irrésistiblement déséquilibré. Une analyse confortée, il y a plus de cinq ans, par la réunion, au magnifique *Centre international de conférences de Qingdao*, des Chefs d'État des pays membres de la SCO (*Shanghai Cooperation Organization*) ou encore la réception de la quasi-totalité des chefs d'État africains à Pékin, et plus récemment, en octobre dernier, par l'engagement fort du pays à la réunion de Kazan (dite des BRICS), une réunion, sur le territoire russe, dépassant largement le cadre des dits BRICS (32 pays présents, trente autres intéressés par une coopération). Certains Instituts réputés ont même parlé de l'affirmation progressive d'une sorte de club des "puissances non occidentales", voire d'une méfiance à l'égard de nos démocraties fatiguées, considérées comme indécentes et donneuses de leçons alors qu'elles sont prises en étau entre leurs valeurs fondatrices et leur remise en cause sociétale (*wokisme, cancel culture, anachronismes, post-vérité, incivisme, violences...*). D'autres, tel l'*Institut de relations internationales et stratégiques (IRIS)*, parlent même de l'entrée « dans une phase qui durera » : celle de « l'ignorance de l'Occident », démontrée pas les distances que le « Sud global » a prises sur l'Ukraine par exemple.

C'est fort de ces interrogations fondamentales que je suis revenu à Qingdao, réinvité par la grande et prestigieuse *Université océanique de Chine (OUC)*<sup>3</sup> avec laquelle un dialogue remarquablement ouvert et constructif existe depuis des années, entre autres avec l'équipe de Jacques Rougerie autour du projet *SeaOrbiter*. Qingdao est la capitale historique maritime du pays, mais elle est aussi, et surtout, un moderne épiceutre et l'un des bras armés de la volonté chinoise de faire, si possible en coopération avec le reste du monde, un spectaculaire deuxième « bond en avant » fondé sur le maritime. L'occasion était trop belle d'échanger encore, in situ, avec des responsables chinois compétents et des scientifiques



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« Qingdao est au cœur du deuxième "bond en avant", fondé sur le maritime, que veut faire la Chine. »

"Qingdao is at the heart of China's second 'leap forward', based on the maritime industry."

Francis Vallat

fleets could number up to a thousand ships (one fleet even totalled three thousand!), routinely carrying between thirty and a hundred thousand men: crews, soldiers, engineers and interpreters, embarked on hundreds of 140-metre-long junks, ships of all types and even battleships. It's also worth noting that, as early as 1010, the Chinese had invented the compass and designed ships with watertight compartments (almost nine centuries before the West...).

And then there is the other analysis, which is quite different! The one that highlights the fact that the Chinese are now systematically active throughout the world, that they have granted and are still granting funding to all kinds of maritime actors, in logistics and ports as we know, but also in oceanography, fishing and aquaculture, while sending nuclear ice-breakers to the polar zone, etc... All this undoubtedly proving that China may have embarked on a second 'long march' of

3 - Le nom donné par les Chinois à l'université à destination de l'étranger est *Ocean University of China (OUC)*.



Novembre 2024, célébration solennelle du Centenaire de l'Université océanique de Chine à Qingdao.

November 2024, solemn celebration of the Centenary of the Ocean University of China in Qingdao

éminents, appréciés personnellement au fil des années et engagés, aussi sincèrement que nous, dans la connaissance et la protection de l'Océan. En outre, il s'agissait pour moi de continuer prudemment à m'informer, à nourrir ma réflexion, si possible sans duperie ni naïveté, sur les conséquences de l'inéluctable déplacement du barycentre du monde vers l'Asie, et en particulier Pékin. Avec toujours la sauvegarde de la mer et des fonds marins dans mon viseur !

Au-delà des très importants aspects géopolitiques, il importe en effet de prendre la mesure d'autres facettes majeures du développement maritime chinois, certes porteuses d'un accroissement de l'influence de la Chine, mais aussi et surtout déterminantes pour l'avenir des mers et donc de la planète. Je pense, par exemple, à la récente croissance qualitative et quantitative de la flotte de navires scientifiques, dont on parle peu mais qui est tout aussi impressionnante que celle de la flotte militaire. Avec pour résultat que la Chine est devenue le numéro 1 mondial de ce secteur crucial, aussi bien en termes de nombre de navires (environ 70) que de laboratoires embarqués, avec des dizaines d'unités de même gabarit que notre *Pourquoi Pas ?* de l'Ifremer, mais aussi des prototypes opérationnels (apparemment destinés à être dupliqués en nombre) vraiment impressionnants. Parmi les navires de recherche océanographiques chinois, je citerais par exemple le *Tansuo-1*, équipé de 10 laboratoires permanents et de deux laboratoires amovibles pour étudier les sciences abyssales (biologie, écologie et géologie)<sup>4</sup>, ainsi que d'un sous-marin embarqué,

a clearly hegemonic nature, relying on its immense intrinsic weight, its huge resources and its centralised political and economic organisation as formidable weapons paving the way for its future leadership of an irresistibly unbalanced multilateral world.

An analysis reinforced, more than five years ago, with the meeting, at the magnificent Qingdao International Conference Centre, of the Heads of State of the member countries of the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization), or the reception of almost all the African Heads of State in Beijing, and more recently, last October, by the country's strong commitment to the Kazan meeting (known as the BRICS), a meeting held on the Russian territory, going far beyond the framework of the so-called BRICS (32 countries present, with another thirty interested in cooperation). Some renowned institutes even commented on the gradual emergence of a sort of club of 'non-Western powers', or even a mistrust of our tired democracies, regarded as indecent and preachy at a time when they are caught in a vice between their founding values and their social questioning (woke culture, cancel culture, anachronisms, post-truth, incivility, violence, etc.). Others, such as the French Institute for International and Strategic Relations (IRIS), even point to the start of 'a phase that is going to last': that of 'the ignorance of the West', as shown by the distance that the 'global South' has taken from Ukraine, for example.

With these fundamental concerns in mind, I returned to Qingdao at the invitation of the great and prestigious Ocean University of China (OUC)<sup>3</sup>, with which we have had a remarkably open and constructive dialogue for many years, including with Jacques Rougerie's team on the SeaOrbiter project. Qingdao is the historic maritime capital of the country, but it is also, and above all, a modern epicentre and one of the key driving forces behind China's determination to make a spectacular second 'leap forward' based on the sea, if possible, in cooperation with the rest of the world.

The occasion was too good to share again, in situ, with competent Chinese officials and eminent scientists, personally appreciated over the years and committed, as sincerely as we are, to the knowledge and protection of the Ocean. For me, it was also a question of continuing to inform myself prudently, to nourish my reflection, if possible, without deception or naivety, on the consequences of the inevitable shift of the world's barycentre towards Asia, and Beijing in particular. And always bearing in mind the need to protect the sea and the seabed!

4- Source France Diplomatie – [www.diplomatie.gouv.fr](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr)

3- The name that the Chinese give to the university abroad is the Ocean University of China (OUC).

le *Fendouzhe*, capable d'explorer les fonds jusqu'à plus de 10 000 mètres, ou encore le *Zhu Hai Yun*, livré en 2023, le premier navire de recherche scientifique, porte-drones, contrôlé à distance et pouvant naviguer de manière autonome en eaux libres, ce qui ouvre des perspectives encore difficiles à évaluer aujourd'hui. En notant au surplus cette particularité que beaucoup de ces navires font partie des infrastructures dont disposent les universités maritimes à l'instar du *Dong Fang Hong 3* (5 600 tonnes, 104 mètres de long, 600 m<sup>2</sup> de laboratoires) rattaché à l'OUC et visité à Qingdao en compagnie de scientifiques venus de tous les continents.

«La croissance de la flotte scientifique de la Chine est tout aussi impressionnante que celle de sa flotte militaire.»

"The growth of China's scientific fleet is just as impressive as that of its military fleet."

Francis Vallat

## LE CENTENAIRE DE L'UNIVERSITÉ OCÉANIQUE DE CHINE

L'objectif concret et affiché de cette nouvelle visite en Chine était multiple. Outre échanger sur l'avenir du vaisseau *SeaOrbiter* auquel nos interlocuteurs scientifiques croient plus que jamais, il s'agissait de participer à la célébration solennelle du centenaire de l'Université océanique de Chine, d'intervenir dans la grande conférence internationale réunissant une cinquantaine de pays, dont le Royaume Uni (l'Ecosse était là) et des pays de l'Union européenne, représentés à un très haut niveau scientifique et travaillant à se rapprocher sur les étapes à franchir pour garantir le futur de l'Océan, avec pour unique slogan «*Pas de frontières pour protéger l'Océan*». Ce qui fut fait bien sûr. Pour ma part, j'ai pu dire librement et fortement mes convictions, y compris sur le moratoire conditionnel pour les grands fonds marins. L'organisation de la conférence a été formidable, aussi aimable et délicate qu'efficace, coordonnée par un monde éducatif dont la (re)découverte «*cinq ans après*» fut réellement impressionnante. Avec toujours les gigantesques universités, dédiées aux enjeux sous-marins et océaniques, où le qualitatif semble encore être à la hauteur de l'inimaginable quantitatif. En très résumé, l'Université océanique de Chine est une galaxie composée, entre autres, de facultés, d'une vingtaine de collèges, d'instituts de recherche, de centres d'ingénierie, d'une Académie internationale de très haut niveau et d'entités particulières comme un centre de formation commun



Beyond the very serious geopolitical aspects, it is important to appreciate the other major aspects of China's maritime development, which will certainly increase China's influence, but will also, and above all, determine the future of the seas and therefore of the planet. I am thinking, for example, of the recent qualitative and quantitative growth in the fleet of scientific vessels, not often mentioned but just as impressive as that of the military fleet. As a result, China has become the world's number one in this key sector, both in terms of ships (around 70 units) and on-board laboratories, with dozens of vessels as big as our Ifremer's *Pourquoi Pas?* but also some truly impressive operational prototypes (apparently destined to be widely duplicated).

Among China's oceanographic research vessels, I would mention the *Tansuo-1*, fitted with 10 permanent laboratories and two removable laboratories to study abyssal sciences (biology, ecology and geology)<sup>4</sup>, and an onboard submarine, the *Fendouzhe*, capable of exploring the seabed to depths of over 10,000 metres, or the *Zhu Hai Yun*, delivered in 2023, the first drone-carrier scientific research vessel, remotely controlled and able to navigate autonomously in open waters, opening up prospects that are still difficult to assess today. Note, moreover, that many of these ships are part of the infrastructure available to maritime universities, like the *Dong Fang Hong 3* (5,600 tonnes, 104 metres long, 600 square metres of laboratories) attached to the OUC and visited in Qingdao in the company of scientists from every continent.

4- Source: France Diplomatie - [www.diplomatie.gouv.fr](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr)



Francis Vallat lors de la conférence internationale sur l'Océan organisée à Qingdao pour le Centenaire de l'Université océanique de Chine.

Francis Vallat at the international conference on the Ocean organised in Qingdao on the occasion of the centenary of the Ocean University of China.

*«L'Université océanique de Chine, 37 000 étudiants dont 3 800 doctorants et de nombreux grands talents étrangers, est un fleuron parfaitement intégré à Qingdao.»*

*"China Ocean University, with its 37,000 students, including 3,800 PhD students, and many top foreign talents, is a flagship institution perfectly integrated into Qingdao."*

Francis Vallat

avec l'Autorité internationale des fonds marins... Cet ensemble, rassemblant plus de 37 000 étudiants, dont 3 800 doctorants et de nombreux grands talents étrangers, constitue un fleuron parfaitement intégré à Qingdao, grosse ville moyenne de 10 millions d'habitants, capitale de la province de Shandong, jumelée avec près de 70 villes dans le monde, dont Marseille bientôt, mais surtout cité extraordinairement vivante, avec un front de mer de 40 kilomètres joliment aménagé et verdoyant, bordé aussi bien de gratte-ciels ou d'immeubles modernes à l'architecture séduisante que de maisons anciennes soigneusement entretenues. Le plus impressionnant est probablement que ce modèle d'universités maritimes, articulé sur le lien Université-Municipalité-Province, existe et se développe, apparemment avec le même dynamisme, dans bien d'autres provinces chinoises. Je n'ai pu en faire l'inventaire complet, mais je peux citer celles sur lesquelles j'ai essayé de me documenter : Hainan, Guangdong-Shenzhen-Zhongshan, Shanghai, Jiangsu-Wuxi (apparemment 4000 personnes dédiées à la seule connaissance des grands fonds marins), Zhejiang-Zoushan etc... Oui, l'engagement océanique chinois est impressionnant, voire incroyable !

A l'image de cette annonce, faite fin novembre 2024, dans le journal chinois *South China Morning Post*, de la capacité qu'aurait désormais le pays à poser des câbles de fibre optique à 11 000 mètres de profondeur avec un engin, le *Haiwei GD11000*, développé notamment par l'Université maritime de Dalian.

Un pas en avant incroyable tant sur le plan de la recherche que sur le plan stratégique... le record précédent des Américains, 6 600 mètres, étant littéralement pulvérisé. Exploit au

## THE CENTENARY OF THE OCEAN UNIVERSITY OF CHINA

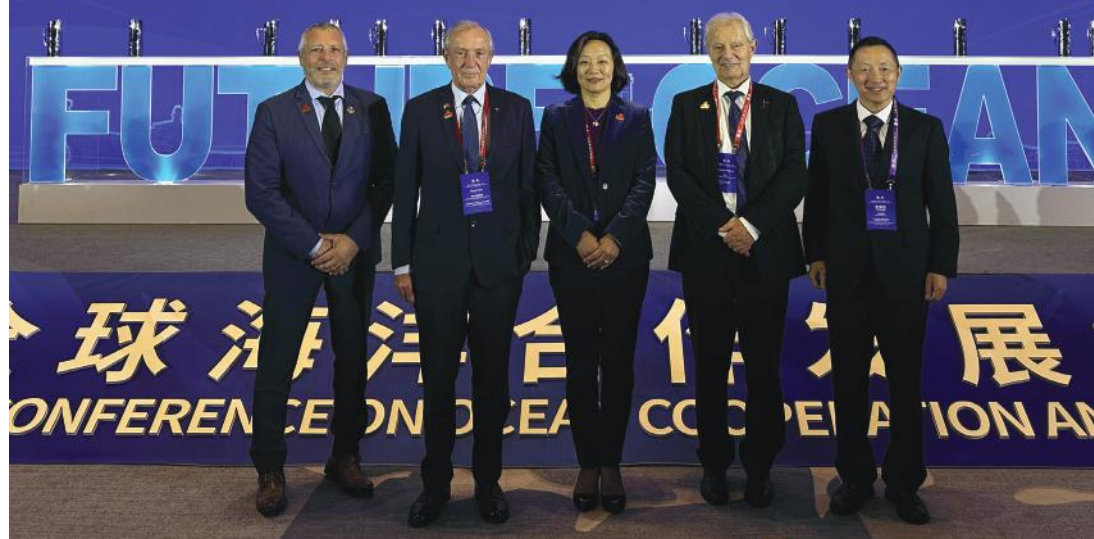
There were many concrete aims to this new visit to China. Apart from discussing the future of the SeaOrbiter vessel, about which our scientific contacts believe more than ever, the aim was to take part in the solemn celebration of the centenary of the Ocean University of China, and to speak at the major international conference attended by some fifty countries, including the United Kingdom (Scotland was also present) and countries of the European Union, represented at a very high scientific level and working to reach agreement on the steps to be taken to guarantee the future of the Ocean, with the single banner of 'No borders to protect the Ocean'. And that's exactly what we did. For my part, I had the opportunity to express my convictions freely and strongly, including on the question of a conditional moratorium on the deep seabed. The conference was superbly organised, as friendly and sensitive as it was efficient, coordinated by an academic community whose (re)discovery 'five years later' was truly impressive. Still with the gigantic universities, dedicated to underwater and oceanic issues, where the qualitative still seems to be equal to the unimaginable quantitative. To sum up, the Ocean University of China is a galaxy made up of university faculties, some twenty colleges, research institutes, engineering centres, a top-class international academy and special entities such as a training centre run in association with the International Seabed Authority... With more than 37,000 students, including 3,800 PhD students, and a host of top foreign talents, this complex is a flagship perfectly inte

主办单位：中国海洋大学  
Organizer: Ocean University of China

2024年10月24日 中国·青岛  
October 24, 2024 Qingdao, China

L'équipe du projet français Sea Orbiter destiné à la mise en œuvre de la première Station océanique internationale. De gauche à droite : Ariel Fuchs, Francis Vallat, Yan Shen, Jacques Rougerie, son initiateur, et le Professeur Hongda Shi, coordinateur de l'Université océanique de Chine pour le projet.

The French Sea Orbiter project team working on the first International Ocean Station. From left to right: Ariel Fuchs, Francis Vallat, Yan Shen, Jacques Rougerie, initiator, and Professor Hongda Shi, coordinator of the China Ocean University project.



« Nos interlocuteurs scientifiques maritimes, coordonnés par le réputé professeur Hongda Shi, ont décidé depuis plusieurs années de participer à l'aventure SeaOrbiter. »

"Our marine scientific contacts, coordinated by the renowned Professor Hongda Shi, joined the SeaOrbiter adventure several years ago."

Francis Vallat

quel s'ajoute celui de l'Université Jiao Tong de Shanghai qui a fait plonger, en juillet 2024, le *Kaituo 2*, un engin de 14 tonnes (pour une charge utile de plusieurs centaines de kilos), à plus de 4000 mètres, un succès et un tournant décisifs pour l'exploration, mais aussi une avancée vers l'exploitation<sup>5</sup>, soulignant l'importance des débats en cours sur le code minier international à l'Autorité internationale des fonds marins.

Autre observation, peut-être inquiétante à certains égards : l'efficacité assez admirable de cet engagement océanique chinois s'appuie sur une volonté politique qui passe par une organisation « politico-administrative », certes plus que critiquable sur le plan de la respiration démocratique telle qu'elle est conçue « chez nous », mais dont la cohérence est redoutable. Apparemment, à tous les niveaux, le parti communiste veille au grain pour les démarches vers le gouvernement central (à l'amont des décisions importantes) puis pour l'application des décisions prises (à l'aval des dites décisions). Il ne s'agit là que d'une im-

grated into the city of Qingdao, a large medium-sized city of 10 million inhabitants, capital of Shandong province, twinned with nearly 70 cities around the world, including Marseille soon, but above all an extraordinarily lively city, with a beautifully laid-out and green waterfront stretching over 40 kilometres, bordered either by skyscrapers or modern and attractive buildings, or by old, carefully maintained, houses. The most impressive thing is probably that this model of maritime universities, based on the link between university, municipality and province, exists and is developing, apparently with the same momentum, in many other Chinese provinces. I couldn't compile a complete list, but I can mention the ones I tried to find out about: Hainan, Guangdong-Shenzhen-Zhongshan, Shanghai, Jiangsu-Wuxi (apparently 4,000 people dedicated solely to deep-sea knowledge), Zhejiang-Zoushan etc. Indeed, China's commitment to the ocean is impressive, not to say unbelievable!

As in the case of the announcement, made in late November 2024 in the Chinese newspaper South China Morning Post, of the capacity that the country would now have to lay fibre optic cables at a depth of 11,000 metres using a robot, the Haiwei GD11000, developed in particular by the Dalian Maritime University. An incredible step forward in terms of both research and strategy... the previous American record of 6,600 metres has literally been smashed. An achievement complemented by that of Shanghai Jiao Tong University, which in July 2024 plunged the *Kaituo 2*, a 14-tonne craft (with a payload of several hundred kilos), to more than 4,000 metres, a decisive success and turning point for exploration, but also a step towards exploitation<sup>5</sup>, underlining the importance of the debates now taking place on the international mining code at the International Seabed Authority.

5 - A l'heure actuelle la Norvège, le Canada, la Belgique, le Japon et d'autres pays, dont la Chine donc, travaillent activement cette possibilité qui rend plus actuelle la définition des contraintes de protection l'environnement.

5 - At present, Norway, Canada, Belgium, Japan and other countries, including China, are actively working on this option, making the definition of environmental protection constraints more relevant.



L'architecte océanographe Jacques Rougerie, à l'initiative du projet de station océanique internationale *Sea Orbiter* (en arrière-plan), sur le site d'un centre de formation à Qingdao baptisé « Fondation Jacques Rougerie ».

The architect and oceanographer Jacques Rougerie, who initiated the *Sea Orbiter* international ocean station project (in the background), on the site of a learning centre in Qingdao named the 'Jacques Rougerie Foundation'.

pression, mais j'ai très bien senti – comme les collègues européens avec qui j'ai échangé – la très forte attente de l'*Université océanique de Chine* des décisions du pouvoir central concernant les moyens (financiers et autres) nécessaires à la poursuite et au développement de son action, et surtout l'optimisme et la résolution qui ont suivi l'annonce de l'arbitrage favorable, matérialisé par la lecture d'un message explicite du Président Xi Jinping à l'occasion du centième anniversaire de l'Université : « *Le président Xi Jinping a encouragé la communauté de l'OUC à prendre le centenaire comme un nouveau point de départ et à faire progresser le développement technologique. Il a exhorté l'université à se concentrer davantage sur la recherche originale et pionnière afin de réaliser des percées dans le domaine de la science maritime... et à former davantage de talents exceptionnels avec un engagement fort dans le domaine maritime... Nous espérons que l'université contribuera davantage à faire de la Chine un pays leader en matière d'éducation et un pays maritime fort* ».

Je crois pouvoir dire que nous littéralement vécu la joie et l'optimisme de tous les échelons concernés, à l'idée de disposer de moyens significativement accrus pour aller plus fort et plus vite, sans que soit exprimé aucun doute sur l'effectivité de leur mise à disposition. Le plus intrigant est que cette organisation hiérarchisée laisse apparemment, pour la mise en œuvre et l'exécution, de réelles marges de manœuvre aux professionnels compétents. Elle ne semble pas priver les responsables maritimes et scientifiques de leur liberté de choix dans leur domaine d'action ni de leur liberté d'avancer de manière réfléchie, exclusivement avec des « partenaires » – mot répété à l'envi – de premier choix.

C'est dans cet esprit que nos interlocuteurs scientifiques maritimes, coordonnés par le réputé professeur Hongda Shi, et par ailleurs fervents supporters des travaux de la Fondation Jacques Rougerie<sup>6</sup>, ont décidé depuis plusieurs années de participer à l'aventure *SeaOrbiter*, en s'engageant, fermement et de manière importante, au moins pendant les quatre ou cinq premières années de sa future exploitation, à une utilisation partielle de ce vaisseau destiné à devenir la première *Station*

Another observation, though perhaps worrying in some respects, is that the rather remarkable effectiveness of this Chinese ocean commitment relies on a political will expressed through a 'political-administrative' organisation, which is certainly more than questionable from the point of view of the 'democratic breath' the way we conceive it 'back home', but whose coherence is truly fearsome. Apparently, at every level, the Communist Party keeps a watchful eye on the steps taken towards central government (prior to major decisions) and then on the application of the decisions taken (after those decisions have been made).

This is just a general impression, but like the European colleagues I discussed with, I clearly felt that the Oceanic University of China had high expectations of the central government's decisions regarding the resources (financial and otherwise) needed to pursue and develop its activities, and above all the optimism and determination that followed the announcement of the favourable decision, expressed by the reading of an explicit message from President Xi Jinping on the occasion of the University's centenary: 'President Xi Jinping encouraged the OUC community to take the centenary as a new starting point and advance technological development. He urged the university to further focus on original and pioneering research for making breakthroughs in maritime science... and nurture more outstanding talents with a strong commitment to the maritime field.... It is hoped that the university will make greater contributions to building China into a leading country in education and a strong maritime country'.

In my opinion, we literally experienced the joy and optimism of all the levels involved, at the idea of receiving significantly increased resources to work harder and faster, without any doubts being expressed about the effective provision of these resources. Interestingly, this hierarchical organisation seems to leave real room for manoeuvre to the relevant professionals when it comes to implementing and running the projects. It does not seem to deprive maritime and scientific managers of their freedom of choice in their field of action, nor of their freedom to move forward in a considered manner, exclusively with premium 'partners' - a word repeated over and over again.

6 - Le nom de la Fondation Jacques Rougerie a été donné à un très beau centre de formation à Qingdao.

*océanique internationale*. Un pari raisonnable démontrant encore la volonté chinoise de s'associer de manière opiniâtre à toute initiative vraiment novatrice permettant de mieux connaître les écosystèmes marins.

## UN AUTRE MONDE

Sur un plan plus général, quelques impressions sont devenues certitudes au cours de ce nouveau séjour à Qingdao : l'incroyable énergie des Chinois, perceptible lors de toutes les réunions auxquelles j'ai participé, le dynamisme méthodique et ouvert de leur approche, l'intensité de leur écoute, la volonté d'échanger sans tabou, avec à la clé beaucoup d'amabilité, de délicatesse (tout cela pouvant, certes, être dictée par la diplomatie mais...). Par ailleurs, j'ai à nouveau eu le sentiment très fort d'être vraiment dans un autre monde, plus grand, plus vivant, plus optimiste, plus...tout ! Démesuré parfois, mais sans pourtant être déshumanisé. Un monde en permanente évolution, à la fois fascinant et foisonnant, étalant une richesse étonnante (et pas seulement dans le grand et luxueux quartier international !). Un monde où la population m'a paru affairée mais aussi détendue et amicale, impression ressentie lors de *joggings* impromptus dans des quartiers populaires gais et colorés. Un monde qu'il serait imbécile d'ignorer ou de sous-estimer, vis-à-vis duquel la vigilance est bien sûr de mise mais duquel il est important de se faire entendre. D'autant que la Chine ne cesse d'affirmer son souhait de partage (dans le domaine de la recherche océanique en tout cas) et son souci de tout faire pour sauvegarder la planète. Rien, dès lors, ne justifierait de lui opposer un refus qui serait offensant et le moyen le plus sûr d'insulter l'avenir.

Nous sommes face à un acteur mondial dont il ne faut évidemment jamais oublier le régime politique et les ambitions, mais qui objectivement « interpelle » et avec qui nous avons toutes les raisons d'accepter d'échanger s'il nous le propose... La Chine, à l'évidence, est devenue incontournable, alors que nous ne le sommes pas, ou plus. Mais surtout, j'insiste encore et encore, sur l'incroyable dimension du défi maritime que la Chine d'aujourd'hui lance effectivement au monde comme à elle-même, sur les moyens énormes qu'elle se donne – en particulier à Qingdao – pour avancer. Et ce quelles que soient les réponses que nous faisons ou que nous ferons à ses offres de service ou de coopération !

J'ajoute que, sensible aux doutes exprimés régulièrement sur la volonté réelle de la Chine de protéger la planète, scepticisme qui serait justifié par l'insuffisance de ses investissements dans l'amélioration de son mix de production énergétique (et dont la preuve serait la multiplication de ses mines de charbon), j'ai voulu approfondir le sujet.

J'ai découvert qu'au premier semestre 2024 la Chine a augmenté de 102 GW sa capacité de production d'énergie solaire (+31 %) et de 26 GW sa capacité d'énergie éolienne (+12 %). Au premier trimestre, elle a baissé de 80 % ses autorisations pour les capacités charbonnières. En fait, tout confondu, elle a augmenté ses capacités d'énergies renouvelables « dans des

In this spirit, our maritime scientific contacts, coordinated by the renowned Professor Hongda Shi, and also ardent supporters of the work of the Jacques Rougerie Foundation<sup>6</sup>, decided several years ago to join in the SeaOrbiter adventure, by making a firm and substantial commitment, at least for the first four or five years of its future operation, to partial use of this vessel intended to become the first International Ocean Station. A wise gamble that further demonstrates China's determination to be a staunch partner in any truly innovative initiative to gain a better understanding of marine ecosystems.

*« Nous devons faire entendre  
notre partition dans cet élan maritime  
de la Chine pour affirmer le rôle que nous  
pouvons jouer. »*

*"We have to make our voice  
heard in China's maritime momentum  
to assert the role we can play."*

Francis Vallat

## ANOTHER WORLD

Looking at Qingdao in more general terms, a number of impressions became certain during my stay: the incredible energy of the Chinese, palpable at every meeting I attended, the methodical and open dynamism of their approach, their intense ability to listen, their willingness to exchange ideas without taboos, with a great deal of friendliness and delicacy (all of which may, of course, be dictated by diplomacy, but...). Moreover, I once again had the very powerful feeling of being in another world, bigger, livelier, more optimistic, more... everything! Sometimes exaggerated, but without being dehumanised. A world in constant evolution, both fascinating and abundant, displaying an astonishing wealth (and not just in the big, luxurious international district!).

A world where the people appeared to be busy and yet also relaxed and friendly, an impression I felt during occasional jogs around cheerful and colourful working-class neighbourhoods. A world that it would be foolish to ignore or underestimate, a world that requires vigilance, of course, but where it's important to make our voices heard. All the more so as China is constantly asserting its desire to share (at least in the field of oceanic research) and its concern to do everything possible to safeguard the planet. There is therefore no justification for refusing, which would be offensive and the surest way of insulting the future.

6 - The name of the Jacques Rougerie Foundation has been given to a beautiful training centre in Qingdao.



*proportions record*» (134,5 GW!)<sup>7</sup>. Peut-on, dès lors, raisonnablement continuer à dire, malgré la nécessité subsistante du charbon (bien plus importante que pour l'Allemagne avant le désarmement de son nucléaire), que la Chine n'est pas à l'avant-garde mondiale de l'augmentation de la production d'énergies propres ?

Dans ce domaine, comme dans celui de la protection de l'Océan, il serait malhonnête de nier, et donc d'ignorer, les efforts vertueux colossaux du plus grand pays du monde. Sans angélisme aucun sur ce qui nous oppose vraiment, il serait probablement coupable de ne pas «l'accompagner» quand c'est possible, ne serait-ce que pour faire entendre notre partition dans cet élan maritime que nul ne pourra arrêter, et pour affirmer nos intérêts et le rôle que nous pouvons jouer. Ceci surtout à l'ère du retour de l'*America First* de Donald Trump d'un côté, et de la fragilisation d'un multilatéralisme pourtant nécessaire de l'autre !

Selon un proverbe chinois que m'a autrefois cité un Chinois de Singapour, «*la France est la Chine de l'Europe et la Chine est la France de l'Asie...*». Même si cela se référerait plus à la cuisine, aux femmes et à la culture qu'à l'économie, et même si l'on se doit d'être avisé et précautionneux, cela vaut peut-être le coup de miser sur un dialogue vrai, «pour voir» et peut-être même pour beaucoup plus... ■

7 - Source *Global Energy Monitor et Energy and Clean Air*.

We are faced with a global player whose political regime and ambitions should obviously never be ignored, but who is objectively 'challenging' and with whom we have every reason to agree to exchange views if he offers to do so... It is clear that China has become a key player, whereas we are not, or no longer are. But above all, let me insist again and again on the formidable scale of the maritime challenge that today's China is effectively posing to the world as well as to itself, and on the immense resources it is giving itself - particularly in Qingdao - to move forward. And this no matter how we respond, or will respond, to its offers of service or cooperation!

I should add that, aware of the doubts that are regularly expressed about China's real willingness to protect the planet, a scepticism apparently justified by the inadequacy of its investment in improving its energy production mix (the evidence of which would be the proliferation of its coal mines), I decided to take a closer look at the subject.

I found out that over the first half of 2024 China increased its solar power capacity by 102 GW (+31%) and its wind power capacity by 26 GW (+12%). In the first quarter, it cut its coal-fired capacity permits by 80%.

In fact, all things considered, it has increased its renewable energy capacity 'in record proportions' (134.5 GW!)<sup>7</sup>. Is it therefore reasonable to keep arguing that, despite the continuing need for coal (much greater than for Germany before the disarmament of its nuclear power), China is not at the world forefront in increasing the production of clean energy?

In this field, as in that of ocean protection, it would be dishonest to deny, and hence ignore, the massive virtuous efforts of the largest country in the world. Without being in any way naive about what really divides us, we would probably be wrong not to 'accompany' it whenever possible, were it only to make our voice heard in this maritime momentum that no one will be able to stop, and to assert our interests and the role we can play. Especially at a time when Donald Trump's *America First* is making a comeback on the one hand, while multilateralism, however necessary, is being undermined on the other!

As a Chinese Singaporean once told me, 'France is the China of Europe and China is the France of Asia...'. Even if it referred more to the cuisine, to the women and to the culture than to the economy, and even if we have to be wise and cautious, it is perhaps worth it to bet on a true dialogue, 'to see' and perhaps even for much more... ■

7 - Source *Global Energy Monitor et Energy and Clean Air*.

# GTT, technology for a sustainable world

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# GTT

For over 60 years, GTT has been developing cutting-edge technological solutions for greater energy efficiency. We bring our passion for innovation and technical excellence to the service of our customers, to meet their transformation challenges of today and tomorrow.

We design cryogenic membrane containment systems for the transport and storage of liquefied gas, digital solutions to improve the ship performance, consulting services, training, maintenance assistance and technical studies.

We ensure the highest system performance by offering comprehensive support before, during, and after construction, leveraging the knowledge and know-how of our experts.

More than ever engaged in the energy transition, GTT is committed to the development of hydrogen through its subsidiary Elogen, which designs and assembles electrolyzers for the production of green hydrogen, and by developing our very first liquefied hydrogen carrier.

The GTT teams are at the heart of our mission. Committed and united, we are determined to contribute to the construction of a sustainable world.

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