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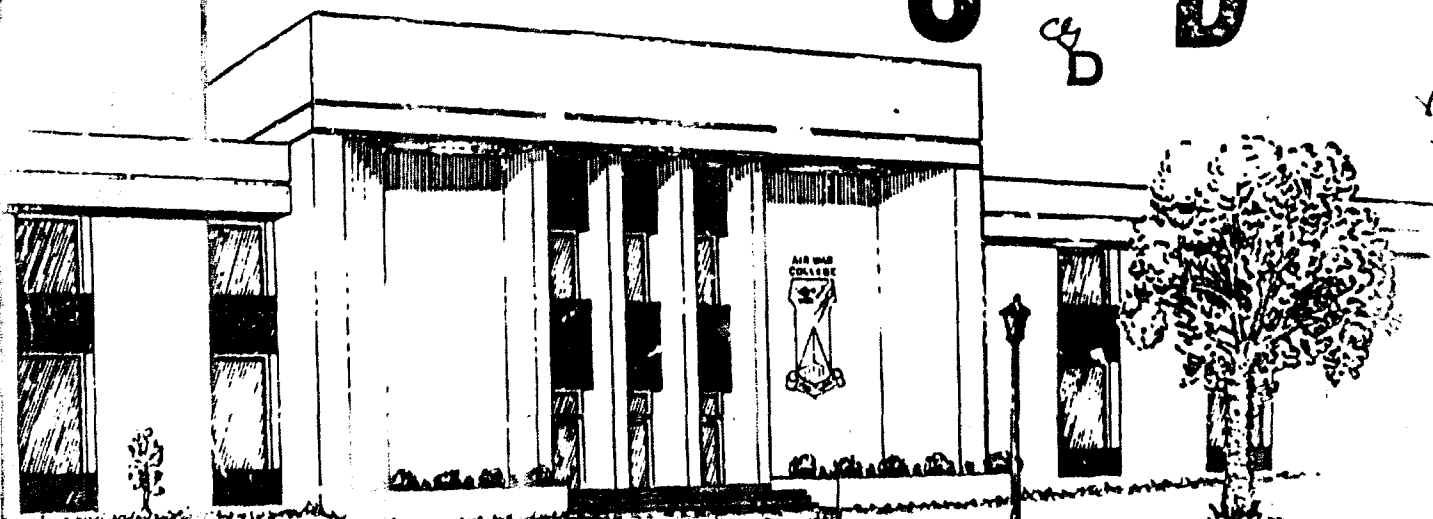
## RESEARCH REPORT

THE UNITED STATES MARITIME STRATEGY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAMES P. SEXTON, USMC

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THE UNITED STATES MARITIME STRATEGY

by

James P. Sexton  
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A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
IN  
FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH  
REQUIREMENT

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AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: The U. S. Maritime Strategy

AUTHOR: James P. Sexton, Lieutenant Colonel, USMC

△The U. S. Maritime Strategy is the most revolutionary strategy since World War II. This strategy is based on the principles of forward deployment, and attacking the enemy in his home waters. Global in nature and countervailing in concept, the Maritime Strategy follows a principle of horizontal escalation. Consequently, a Soviet attack on Western Europe would be met with an immediate U. S. Naval offensive thrust in the oceans surrounding Russia. This paper answers the critics of the Maritime Strategy who question the rationale of its development and justification for a 600 ship/15 carrier battle group Navy. In addition, the U. S. ability to win a decisive naval engagement against the Soviet Navy in their territorial waters is examined. The background of this strategy is outlined in historical context. Finally, the perspective of alternative strategies is described. (FR)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAMES P. SEXTON

Lieutenant Colonel Sexton was born August 6, 1946, in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. He earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from Fitchburg State College and was commissioned a second lieutenant in November 1968. After designation as a naval aviator in January 1970 he reported to VMO-1, at New River, N.C. Transitioning to the AH-1G Cobra in July 1970, he was assigned to HML-367, MAG-16 at Marble Mountain RVN and then on to MAG-24 in Hawaii. Joining HMA-169 at Camp Pendleton, California in 1974, he began deployments aboard the LPH New Orleans serving as the Operations Officer for HMM-165. Further assignments include a tour in Okinawa and three years at Headquarters Marine Corps, Washington D.C. Upon completion of Marine Corps Command and Staff College, he served as the Executive Officer and Commanding Officer of HMA-369 at Camp Pendleton. In June 1986 he was assigned as the Executive Officer of Marine Aircraft Group-39, Camp Pendleton.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The paramount concern of maritime strategy is to determine the mutual relations of your army and navy in a plan of war. (9:14) Sir Julian Corbett

The United States' Maritime Strategy is the most revolutionary and controversial strategy to emerge from the Navy since World War II. This forward offensive strategy, which is centered upon the carrier battle group (CVBG), is designed to seize the initiative <sup>in the event of a war</sup> and attack the Soviets in their home waters. By taking the fight to the enemy and seizing control of the sea, the Navy appears to be returning to the Mahanian maritime concept of seeking decisive engagements. Alfred Thayer Mahan believed to maintain its security, a nation must command the seas or risk invasion or blockade. He advocated fleet against fleet battles. (20:138)

The idea of a global naval strategy is not new: however, the Navy's emphasis on attacking the Soviets in their home waters is new. The Navy's fixation on the Norwegian and Barents Seas, at the expense of the Pacific and Indian Oceans, has spurred some military strategists to question not only the strategy but the rationale behind its development. Can the United States win a decisive naval engagement against the Soviet Navy in their

territorial waters? Or is the forward strategy just a ploy to justify the 600 ship navy?

This paper will outline the development of the forward strategy, examine the viewpoints of the proponents and opponents. The primary focus of this effort will be to evaluate how the Maritime Strategy could be executed in the Norwegian Sea and Barents Sea. In conclusion, possible alternatives to this Norwegian Sea strategy will be offered.

The rebirth of the United States Maritime Strategy began in the late 1970s during President Carter's Administration. With increasing importance placed on a "Continental Strategy" of defending the European central front, the Navy was being relegated to defending Atlantic convoys. Consequently Carter's Secretary of the Navy, Graham Clayton, claimed the Navy was being asked to serve as a "police force" rather than a front-line sophisticated fighting force. (25:10) Then, in 1978, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown told the Navy to anticipate smaller force levels and to structure their fleets to fight "localized contingencies outside of Europe". (26:72) Thus, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Thomas B. Hayward called for the United States Navy to review the manner in which the fleet would be employed against the Soviet Union

in time of war. As a result, the Navy began examining its strategy, doctrine, and force structure.

From a historical perspective, the Navy's forward deployed strategy is not entirely new. In many ways it stems from 19th Century British naval principles of forward deployment and attacking the enemy in their home waters. Lord Nelson established the basic concept of forward strategy in 1801 when he sailed into Copenhagen and destroyed the Danish fleet. Nelson's strategic doctrine supported the concept of aggressively attacking the enemy. At Trafalgar he told his officers just before attacking the French, "No captain can do very wrong who places his ship beside the enemy." (14:30) Through the 19th century, Nelson's edict remained a basic principle of the Royal Navy's Maritime Strategy.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s an American naval strategist, Admiral Alfred T. Mahan, adopted Lord Nelson's principles and began writing about them. Mahan viewed Nelson as the embodiment of his own sea power doctrine and believed that the command of the sea was achieved primarily by aggressively attacking the enemy with a forward strategy. (21:V) The British Navy, already believers in the Nelson strategy, adopted Mahan's doctrines, thus reemphasizing their aggressive Maritime Strategy.

In preparing for World War I, the British Admiralty was significantly influenced by the teachings of Lord Nelson and Admiral Mahan. The basic approach of the Admiralty was one of a forward aggressive strategy designed to seize the initiative from the enemy and attack the Germans in their home waters. However, at the Royal Naval War College, Julian Corbett claimed that attacking the enemy in their home waters may not always be the best strategy. Corbett said the maxim of placing one's ship next to the enemy, "for all of its exhilaration and high sounding Nelsonic spirit, must not displace well reasoned judgement of the battle situation." (9:172-173)

During this time, Mahan was also having second thoughts about forward strategy. He could see that the advancing technology, such as submarines, airplanes and torpedoes, may have changed the nature of maritime warfare. (18:5) Consequently, the British Admiralty cancelled their plans for attacking the German fleet in their ports, and instead adopted a "distant blockade" in the North Sea.

During the late 1920s and 1930s, American naval officers reevaluated the Nelson-Mahan forward strategies as they began preparing for possible conflict with Japan. Mahan's forward offensive strategies were studied by all the American admirals and eventually influenced the course

of action in the Pacific during World War II. Basically, the U. S. Navy's offensive strategy was designed to attack the Japanese and seize command of the seas. The Navy sought decisive naval engagements which would push the Japanese Navy back into their home waters and achieve a major maritime victory in true Nelson--Mahan tradition. (28:58) Eventually after pursuing the Japanese fleet across the Pacific and destroying them in a classic Mahanian decisive naval engagement at Leyte Gulf, this Nelson-Mahan forward strategy helped bring defeat to the enemy. (32:269-311)

In the decades following World War II, U. S. naval leaders drew upon the lessons learned from their experiences and reaffirmed the Nelson--Mahan forward offensive Maritime Strategy. One of the most notable post World War II Chiefs of Naval Operations, Admiral Arleigh Burke, symbolized the tradition of forward strategy. In a 1972 lecture at the Naval War College, Burke stated that he was a traditionalist and was convinced that the lessons of the past were proper guides for the future. Historically, he noted, all great naval leaders had the same characteristics in common. "They all had initiative. They took action. They were audacious." (5:27-28) Then fulfilling the offensive doctrine, Burke deployed the U. S. Navy around the world and in 1953 sent

Marines ashore in Lebanon. Thus, naval leaders needed to follow the Nelsonic fighting spirit in a maritime war.

During the Vietnam War, many naval officers believed that naval forces should have been used in a more aggressive way to seek out the enemy in his home waters and decisively engage him. However, because of political restraints, the Russian and Chinese ships in North Vietnam's harbors were declared off limits. According to John Lehman, during this era naval strategy became blurred by uncertainty over the utility of force for national purposes. In Lehman's view, "Naval strategic thought became focused on technical, logistic and tactical problems, with too little attention to the political context that gives meaning and purpose to strategic thought." (17:785)

Thus in the 1970s the Navy began going through a period of self-examination and developing a different view of their Maritime Strategy. When first proposed, the Maritime Strategy was consistent with the guidance of U. S. National Security Strategy. The National Security Strategy was based upon the principles of deterrence, forward deployed forces, and coalition warfare. Forward deployed forces were designed to discourage local aggression, contribute to regional stability, serve as visible symbols of our country's commitments, and protect

U. S. interests. (24:27) However, in the years since the 1970s, the Maritime Strategy has moved beyond these original tenets.

What are the specific objectives of this forward strategy? First, in time of war, the Navy will seize the initiative from the Soviets and attack as far forward as possible. This will entail proceeding "in harm's way" by fighting in Soviet home waters off the Kola Peninsula. Second, carrier battle forces would be moved forward as soon as possible and third, the Navy would be globally deployed well before hostilities begin. (31:7-11)

The basic structure of the Maritime Strategy contains three phases:

--Phase I--Deterrence or the Transition to War:

During this phase the rapid forward deployment of Naval and Marine forces reinforce deterrence and prepare for war. Should deterrence fail and a war erupt, then the next phase will take effect.

--Phase II--Seizing the Initiative:

Naval forces will establish offensive sea control as rapidly and early as possible and proceed into the third phase.

--Phase III--Carrying the Fight to the Enemy:

Maritime force projection will be applied against high value Soviet assets including their homeland. (4:34-

35) By mandating the position of taking the fight to the enemy, the Navy's new Maritime Strategy has adopted the Nelson and Mahanian tradition of an offensive strategy.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FORWARD MARITIME STRATEGY

In 1978, the Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Hayward stated that he was reassessing "the global nature of the Soviet threat and the global requirements of the U. S. Navy." Consequently, the stage was set for changes in U. S. naval strategy and force structure. Admiral Hayward supported Secretary of the Navy Graham Claytor's efforts for an open discussion of the Maritime Strategy. In a National War College speech, Secretary Claytor vehemently criticized the Carter Administration's attempts to limit the role of the Navy in a future war with the Soviets.

(26:72) Secretary Claytor said:

We must plan a balanced force that is capable of a full range of possible naval missions -- we intend to follow one very old U. S. Navy tradition, and that is to go in harms' way. (25:10)

Admiral Haywood claimed that if forward deployment of naval and marine forces did not deter war during an initial crisis with the Soviets, then the U. S. naval forces could at least accomplish a number of other options. First, the extensive Soviet Northern Fleet would be bottled up in their home waters and prevented from sailing out into the North Atlantic. Second, significant Soviet air, naval and ground forces could be tied up in

the defense of the homeland and therefore unable to assist in the European central front campaign. Third, U. S. naval forces could threaten the Soviets with global conventional war by horizontal escalation in both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters. (26:72) In this horizontal escalation strategy, any Soviet attack on Western Europe would be met with immediate hostilities in other theaters, which would keep global pressure on Soviet forces and their allies.

Although Admiral Hayward is generally believed to have developed the forward maritime strategy, his predecessor as Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Holloway also supported a forward strategy. In 1975, Admiral Holloway stated that the current U. S. national strategy was a "forward strategy". (15:6) He also outlined two major responsibilities for the Navy: First, to provide forward deployed ships and aircraft and second, to protect the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs).

Admiral Hayward's strategy was essentially the same, except the Navy needed a worldwide capability which would threaten U. S. enemies from different directions.

We must fight on the terms which are most advantageous to us. This requires taking the war to the enemy's naval forces with the objective of achieving the earliest possible destruction of his capability to interfere with our use of sea areas essential for support of our own forces and allies. (13:63)

In the summer of 1981, the new Secretary of the Navy, John F. Lehman, wrote an article titled, "Rebirth of a U. S. Naval Strategy." Secretary Lehman publicly discussed this new strategy which, up until this time, had been largely classified. He called for a reawakening of national resolve in a global U. S. role. This strategy should be countervailing, attacking the enemy's weakness and providing for a U. S. naval superiority over any naval opponent. (17:784) In his call for a revitalized naval strategy, Secretary Lehman stressed that "strategy is the means to achieve ends," and "political purpose must always dominate strategy...." (17:786)

He believed that a proper political policy at higher levels was absolutely fundamental for an effective strategy. Once clear national interests and objectives were stated by the political leadership, then the formulation of naval strategy could take place. Having received his guidance from the Reagan Administration, Secretary Lehman outlined his Maritime Strategy. "The U. S. Navy of the near future will be visibly offensive in orientation...and the U. S. Navy will be global in reach." (17:790) Based on U. S. social and cultural values, the U. S. traditionally favored a defensive posture. Thus, noted Lehman, "as a result, we have tended to rank deterrence as our principle goal, and forgotten

that the real business of military forces is warfighting." (17:790) This Maritime Strategy, continued Lehman, would stress forward deployment including operations capable of warfighting in areas regarded as "high risk". (17:790)

Secretary Lehman did not view this new strategy as independent of the other services and stated that, "a far greater integration of roles and missions across services will be required." (17:791) Also, every technological advantage must be exploited, especially in the areas of antisubmarine warfare (ASW). He noted that U. S. National Security Strategy dictated the Maritime Strategy and framework for employing the naval forces throughout the world. It was clear to Secretary Lehman that this strategy involved a number of significant and widely separated regions. The U. S. naval forces would be required to challenge Soviet naval presence in these regions and would therefore dictate a force structure change. Thus, according to Lehman, not only would the existing fleet require extensive modernization, but a significant increase in numbers and types of ships would be necessary: A 600 ship Navy.

As maritime planners began the rebirth of U. S. naval forces, they faced three major constraints. First, they had to consider the vast expanse of the world's

oceans; second, the extent of U. S. vital interests; and third, the growing global Soviet naval threat. (27:7-8) One such planner, former Chief of Naval Operations under Secretary Lehman, Admiral James D. Watkins, stated "the goal of the overall maritime strategy was to use maritime power, in combination with the efforts of our sister services and forces of our allies, to bring about war termination on favorable terms." (31:3)

Admiral Watkins stressed the Maritime Strategy was the maritime component of the National Military Strategy, which emphasized allied coalition warfare and cooperation with sister services. (31:4) He also stated that the Maritime Strategy was not a detailed war plan with firm time lines, tactical doctrine, or specific target sets. Indeed unified and specified commanders would fight the war under the guidance of the President and Secretary of Defense, using the Maritime Strategy as a global perspective. Consequently, this strategy became a key element in determining weapons systems and force structure, as well as a vehicle for shaping and disseminating a professional consensus on warfighting. (31:4)

Another advocate of the Maritime Strategy was Vice Admiral H. C. Mustin. In relating the strategy to the NATO environment, Admiral Mustin stated that it was based

on deterrence. Should deterrence fail, then the strategy of forward defense to protect NATO and its members was necessary. (23:2) These forward deployed maritime forces would play a decisive role in defending the northern flank of NATO. The loss of Norway, Iceland or Greenland could be a turning point in the battle for the Atlantic. In addition, losing control of the Baltic Straits would allow the Soviet Baltic Fleet access into the Norwegian Sea. Therefore, he concluded, NATO and the United States needed an offensive strategy to deal with the Soviets.

Admiral Mustin conceded that it would be costly in terms of men and ships, but the Soviets were not invincible. With the full cooperation of U. S. sister services and NATO allies, the U. S. carrier fleet would prevail and force the Soviets back into their home waters. (23:3)

Admiral Mustin further stated that the Soviets recognize the immense threat of the carrier battle groups and acknowledge that the carrier was more survivable than fixed airfields. Yet, "Our strategy is not a hell-bent-for-leather dash northward to the Kola Peninsula," he claimed. (23:4) Agreeing with Mustin, both Admiral Watkins and Secretary Lehman also stated that they did not propose to race blindly into the jaws of waiting Soviet forces. The U. S. naval forces would choose the time and

place of their naval engagements and therefore take the initiative from the enemy.

Admiral Mustin expressed concern that some experts rejected this forward strategy and favored the establishment of a maritime Maginot Line near the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom "gap" (G.I.U.K.). In this strategy, the naval forces could remain behind this line and protect the Sea Lines of Communication. But, Mustin noted, relegating the Navy to convoy escort across the Atlantic would relinquish the initiative to the Soviets and invite defeat. Such a strategy, continued Mustin, would open Norway and Iceland for invasion. From this vantage point the Soviets could threaten the entire northern NATO flank and the key resupply areas in the United Kingdom. We would be adopting a strategy which would amount to a defacto write-off of the Northern NATO allies, Mustin concluded. (23:5)

In summary, control of the Norwegian Sea with offensive sea control operations would present the Soviets with severe problems in their attempt to invade the northern flank. The Maritime Strategy fulfills NATO objectives in the Norwegian Sea by repelling the Warsaw Pact amphibious assault upon Norway and containing the Soviet Northern Fleet in their home waters. (23:5)

In seizing the initiative from the Soviets, the U. S. Maritime Strategy calls for using carrier air power to help establish sea control. As this phase of the strategy unfolds, a vigorous ASW campaign, including attacks upon the Soviet ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) by U. S. and allied forces, will take place. Soviet leadership is constantly calculating the nuclear threat, correlating force balance and using the results in their decision making process. Critics claim by attacking Soviet SSBNs and upsetting the force balance, the Soviets will have to escalate into a nuclear exchange with the U. S. and NATO allies. However, Navy strategist Linton Brooks, (Capt. USN) argues that the destruction of Soviet SSBNs will not cause a global nuclear exchange. Brooks believes that an assessment of escalation risk should be based on an evaluation of their military doctrine. The Soviets place nuclear weapons under very tight political control in the same manner as the West. Their doctrine calls for attacks on western ballistic submarines as an integral component of conventional war; therefore this is a legitimate military task. (3:79-80) They assume the U. S. will also attack their SSBNs and according to Brooks, this will not be escalatory. Former Commander of the Soviet Navy, Admiral Sergei Gorshkov summarized this policy:

Among the main efforts of a fleet, the most important

of them has become the use of the forces of the fleet against the naval strategic nuclear systems of the enemy with the aim of disrupting...their strikes....  
(12:221)

From Brooks' perspective, the Maritime Strategy is a good one and although there is an element of the unknown involved, no strategy is without risk. Maritime forces by themselves cannot prevent a war or guarantee complete victory. They do, however, play a significant role in deterrence and war termination. Thus, concludes Brooks, forward strategy is necessary:

...the escalatory risk associated with conventional attacks on SSBN forces at sea should be acceptable as a unique means of gaining war termination leverage. Threatening SSBNs by conventional means carries far less risk of escalation than does the use of tactical nuclear weapons to restore a declining battlefield situation, a risk that NATO has accepted for years.  
(3:81)

Consequently, many strategists believe the overriding principle of preserving the Soviet motherland and the communist state could drive the Soviet leadership to accept a significant defeat of their surface and SSBN naval fleet before escalating to global nuclear warfare.

Another advocate of the Maritime Strategy is the current Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Carlisle J. A. H. Trost. Recent criticism and vigorous discussions of the Maritime Strategy, commented Trost, "overlooks plain fact and even plainer common sense." (29:13) Since the qualitative advantage in people and superiority of our

technology is shrinking, stated Trost, the country needs a strong national strategy. (29:14) One key element in this national strategy is the current Maritime Strategy. Yet in Admiral Trost's view, the Maritime Strategy has become somewhat calcified. Trost wanted all subsequent revisions to be "more flexible." (30:7) Just as the Soviet military planners have multiple options available to them, so must U. S. planners. Trost believes that U. S. campaign plans need to contain multiple options and flexibility in operations.

Critics interpret some of Admiral Trost's statements as a change in the CNO's commitment to the Maritime Strategy: However, this analysis does not appear correct. In advocating a flexible offensive Maritime Strategy, Admiral Trost clearly states:

The defensive approach to our professional problems, such as SLOC protection, appeals to the analyst who likes neat, clean packaged problems. In the sprawl of conflict, neatness is impossible, and forward pressure is the only answer. Don't let the adversary take the initiative. (30:8)

In summary, the proponents' position for the offensive Maritime Strategy is as follows: The Maritime Strategy is an integrated component of the National Military Strategy which significantly contributes to deterrence, enhances coalition warfare by supporting the continental commitment and is operationally achievable.

### CHAPTER III

#### OPPOSITION TO THE FORWARD MARITIME STRATEGY

Virtually all critics of the offensive Maritime Strategy agree on three issues: First, maritime superiority is indispensable for the protection of U. S. SLOCs. Second, the Maritime Strategy is an offensive, forward deployed strategy which requires substantial numbers of ships and men to execute properly. However, critics claim large deck carriers can be replaced with small carriers. Third, in order to execute effectively, claim these critics, these naval forces must be deployed before the war starts, and they must sail as far forward as possible.

Criticism of the Maritime Strategy falls into four major areas: First, should the Maritime Strategy take precedence over the Continental Strategy, which is based on the NATO alliance? Second, should the U. S. fleet be deployed offensively in high threat areas? Third, in support of Europe's Central Front, what is the deterrence value of a naval campaign near Russia's Kola Peninsula? Finally, given economic restraints, is building a 600 ship navy with fifteen carrier battle groups in support of a forward Maritime Strategy the proper way to distribute U. S. defensive expenditures? To properly evaluate the

effectiveness of the new Maritime Strategy, in the following pages each of these criticisms will be outlined.

One of the most vocal critics of the Maritime Strategy is Robert Komer, former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (1979-1980). Komer believes that a Maritime Strategy alone without a proper balance of air and ground forces, will fail. However, he claims that a Maritime Strategy is absolutely essential for keeping the sea-lanes open. (16:x) While the defense posture should begin with a statement of strategic interests followed by a process of evaluating alternatives, Komer finds our present force structure dictated more by political factors, economic constraints, and parochial competition between the services for the constrained resources. (16:xiii)

In looking at U. S. military professionals, Komer states they have not done enough serious study of conventional strategic issues. Thus, he notes, the military as an institution is incapable of providing the appropriate strategic advice. (16:17)

From an historical perspective, Komer contends that for the first 150 years of its existence, the United States was protected from hostile pressure by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 helped establish a form of isolationism from the European powers

and was not significantly altered until the post Civil War period. Then in the late nineteenth century, Admiral Mahan's offensive outward looking maritime doctrine caused a navy to examine its coastal defensive role and begin deploying its fleet around the world.

During World War I, for the first time in its history, the United States bolted out of its isolationism and began fighting in Europe. Since there was no major naval threat, and therefore no competing strategies, America quickly adopted a defensive force-projection strategy. However, a traditional confrontation between maritime and continental strategies occurred during World War II, stated Komer. This clash between the Continental Coalition Strategy and a Maritime Strategy was most evident in the competition for landing craft. Both the European and Pacific commanders needed these vehicles to prosecute their separate strategies. In the end, Europe received priority for military equipment. (16:5)

After World War II, U. S. strategy focused on the communist threat and the means of preventing Soviet expansion. According to Komer, NATO became increasingly important when relative U. S. economic power was declining and Soviet capabilities were increasing. Therefore, Komer stated, "the single greatest remaining U. S. strategic advantage over the USSR is that we are blessed with many

rich allies, while the Soviets have only a handful of poor ones." (16:27)

Komer contends that two schools have emerged which disagree over what kind of Navy is essential for maritime superiority. One school supports allocating the majority of U. S. resources in support of a maritime supremacy strategy. Designed to not only exercise command of the seas and protect U. S. SLOCs, this strategy also calls for an offensive force projection against the Soviet Union. The other school, a more continental perspective, seeks a stronger commitment to the defense of Western Europe, Japan and the Persian Gulf. This strategy implies a more balanced military force with increased emphasis on land and air capabilities. Both schools accept the premise that maritime superiority is indispensable, but disagree on the means and kind of navy that would be essential for that purpose. The bottom line is a choice between a sea control navy or an offensively oriented navy, targeted against the Soviet Union. (16:36)

In Komer's view, the discussion should not be one of maritime (Navy) versus continental (Army) with the associated interservice arguments for scarce resources. Instead the objectives should be an evaluation of a balanced force approach with limited resources and extensive global commitments. In building his case, Komer

cites the Carter Administration as an example. Under President Carter, the post Vietnam decline in U. S. defense spending was reversed and strategy was allowed to determine resources. (16:53) Harold Brown, the Secretary of Defense during the Carter Administration, also focused his efforts on building a balanced multiservice force. (16:55)

Komer believes the balanced approach is not taking place in the present Reagan Administration. In his view Secretary of Defense Weinberger has allocated the bulk of U. S. conventional force funding to the Navy at the expense of the other services. Komer cites Secretary Weinberger's statement: " The most significant force expansion proposed by the administration centers on the Navy, particularly those components of it which have offensive missions." (16:57) As a result, Secretary of the Navy Lehman began requesting his 600 ship naval program, including 15 carrier battle groups and significant increases in amphibious assault capabilities. Komer believes that the Army will once again take the brunt of fiscal cutbacks and be unable to support the NATO allies.

A former Army Chief of Staff, General Meyer, summarized this problem:

The issue is do you force yourself in the 1970s to

rely upon a maritime strategy or do you continue to have balanced forces that can respond in a unified way with all the service elements? (16:59)

Komer believes "the United States is drifting by default towards a primarily maritime strategy" (16:59) In contrast, Secretary Lehman has stated the Navy's carrier-heavy buildup to 15 carrier battle groups (CVBGs) is required to prevail simultaneously over the Soviet Navy in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans. Yet, Komer believes the Reagan Administration has called for horizontal escalation and inappropriately placed "greater emphasis on roughly simultaneous carrier offensive, instead of sequential ones, thus justifying the fifteen CVBGs already funded." (16:60) Yet notes Komer, horizontal escalation is not a workable strategy.

Robert Komer finds support for some of his concerns from senior "black shoe" (surface ship) admirals such as Elmo Zumwalt, Worth Bagley and Stansfield Turner. These admirals criticize the offensive strategy and support distributing U. S. naval power over a larger number of smaller, less expensive ships. However, there is some disagreement among the admirals concerning the emphasis which should be placed on using carrier aircraft or cruise missiles as defensive weapons. (16:62)

In summing up Robert Komer's position, the Reagan Administration has focused primarily on rebuilding U. S. capabilities rather than reemphasizing coalition warfare with our allies. Instead, the administration is locked into building a 600 ship navy with 15 CVBGs with significant increases in amphibious assault capabilities, and this unbalanced approach, at the expense of the land and air military components, erodes the advantages of a coalition approach to warfare in Europe and around the world. (16:106)

Another strong opponent to the Maritime Strategy is John J. Mearsheimer, associate professor of political science at the University of Chicago. He argues the 600 ship navy is designed to carry out the Maritime Strategy and is being built at the expense of American air and ground forces in central Europe. (22:3) He contends that deterring the Soviet threat to NATO is the basis upon which the Maritime Strategy should be evaluated. Since NATO is the most important and demanding contingency for the U. S. military, the U. S. Navy must recognize that its chief role lies in its support of central Europe. (22:4)

Mearsheimer outlines four major problems with the Maritime Strategy. First, the Navy simply has not articulated a coherent strategy for deterring the Soviets. The current Maritime Strategy is the Navy's

first attempt at providing strategic rationale for its 600 ships and in many cases it is not clearly stated. (22:5)

According to Mearsheimer:

...the vagueness and hydra-headed quality of the maritime strategy make it difficult for observers to challenge...this kind of ambiguity is bureaucratically advantageous, however, because it provides the Navy with multiple rationales for its forces as well as a very demanding set of military requirements.... (22:18)

Second, states Mearsheimer, the offensive concepts encompassed by the Maritime Strategy contribute little to deterrence in Europe and may actually detract from it.

(22:5) Since the Soviet Union is essentially a land based power, they would show little attention to naval considerations in its decision making process on whether to initiate war with NATO. (22:9) Thus, the Maritime Strategy as a deterrent is seriously flawed, states Mearsheimer, and has the opposite effect by shifting the strategic nuclear balance. There are three basic reasons for this: First, the U. S. leadership may not have the political will to allow the Navy to attempt to execute the strategy. Second, the Navy may not be capable of effectively executing the strategy. Third, a successful anti-SSBN campaign will not coerce the Soviets into better behavior, noted Mearsheimer. (22:53)

The Navy's main value for deterrence, continued Mearsheimer, lies in sea control where protection of NATO's SLOCs could disrupt Soviet strategic plans. Thus the Navy should adopt a defensive sea control strategy, since offensive sea control is counter-productive and exposes the NATO SLOCs. (22:5) If the U. S. Navy is overwhelmed by the Soviet Navy in the Norwegian Sea, then all of Europe is in jeopardy. Sea control is where the Navy can do the most for NATO, commented Mearsheimer. The Soviets must not think they can cut the SLOCs quickly and achieve a blitzkrieg victory. To accomplish this, a defensive sea control strategy best suits NATO's needs. Indeed, adopting a defensive sea control strategy could allow the Navy to reduce its dependence on a 600 ship navy/15 CVBGs. According to Mearsheimer, approximately ten battle groups could provide enough deterrence to prevent Soviet SSNs from leaving their home waters. (22:55)

The fourth and final problem centers around President Reagan's policy of favoring the Navy over ground and tactical air forces, which hurts U. S. deterrent posture. The best way of providing a deterrence posture in Western Europe is to strengthen the coalition forces of NATO in front of the Warsaw Pact armies. (22:55-56) By reducing the size of the U. S. Navy, funding for the

ground and air forces which effect deterrence the most would be available. Mearsheimer does not argue that the Navy is irrelevant, for it has a vital role in offensive sea control; however, the key to deterrence is not the Navy but the air and ground forces on the central front.

(22:57)

Another critic of U. S. naval policy is Jack Beatty. In his Atlantic Monthly article, Beatty states the Maritime Strategy may be the most innovative idea since World War II but looks like a very bad bet. According to Beatty, the rationale for the Maritime Strategy emanated from a lecture given at the Naval War College in 1979 by an OMB official in the Carter Administration, Randy Jayne. Jayne claimed the Navy had to develop a strategic rationale for their budget, in a time when President Carter was trying to restore the ground forces credibility to effectively defend Europe. If the Navy failed to develop a strategy, concluded Jayne, they would lose the funding and shrink further in size.

(1:37)

According to Beatty, the Maritime Strategy appears to have an institutional momentum of its own, with the driving force to build former Secretary Lehman's 600 ships. Beatty feels the term "in harm's way" is just nautical bravado and claims the Maritime Strategy is a

template for global conventional war with the Soviets. Under the Carter Administration, the Navy was assigned the task of a transatlantic ferry for the European bound U. S. Army. A secondary naval task included defensive sea control against Soviet submarine attempts to sever NATO SLOCs. (1:38)

Beatty insists that the portrayal of the Soviet naval threat is greatly exaggerated, not only in numbers but in quality. However, he does concede that the Soviets do possess the largest fleet of strategic-missile carrying submarines in the world. "These SSBNs alone make the Soviet Navy a formidable force," Beatty stated. (1:39) Also Beatty believes that an institutional motivated bias exists today in the Navy. (1:40) To often, he notes, the Navy views reality in its own terms and not as it truly exists and thus it is too self-serving.

Beatty argues that the main contributions of the allied navies during World War II were through defensive measures such as the blockades and convoys. In addition, the Navy's present offensive strategy was derived from the offensive model in the World War II Pacific theater, at the exclusion of the Atlantic theater posture. This Pacific strategy was conducted by carrier task forces and was based on intervention in basically weak Third World nations, instead of an attack on the mainland of a great

power, like Russia, today. (1:41) Therefore, there are few common elements between the World War II Pacific campaign and today's Maritime Strategy against the Soviet Union.

The key to Beatty's reservations of the Maritime Strategy is the stated U. S. Navy position of attacking the Soviet SSBNs. Beatty believes the Soviets would not accept the sinking of their SSBNs as part of a conventional war with the NATO navies. The Soviets might accept the sinking of some of their SSBNs, thinking the U. S. attack subs could not distinguish between SSNs and SSBNs. But the policy of attacking their SSBNs may well cause the Soviets to escalate and employ nuclear mines or missiles on U. S. carrier battle groups, and risk the next possible counter-escalation of global nuclear exchange.

(1:49)

Beatty raises the question of accomplishing the offensive sea control strategy with submarines vice carriers. He then poses two broader questions. Should the offensive Maritime Strategy be executed at all? Or would U. S. national interests be best served by returning to a defensive strategy which would entail less expense and risk? (1:53)

The last opponent to the Maritime Strategy considered here is Hamlin A. Caldwell, Jr. A graduate of the U. S. Naval Academy and the Naval War College, he currently owns his own consulting firm. According to Caldwell, the Maritime Strategy is an aggressive concept which appeals to every instinct of a Navy fighting man. Indeed this strategy holds the possibility of providing deterrence, blocking the Soviet Navy from exiting their northern bastions, securing the northern flank of NATO and projecting naval power directly towards the Soviet motherland. Yet Caldwell believes this strategy provides a significant "home field advantage" for the Soviets and may give them a prohibitive edge. (5:48)

A more defensive strategy vice the offensive spirit imbued by Mahan would provide an effective basis for dealing with the Soviet SSN threat. The advantage the Soviets enjoy in their home waters would allow them to sow extensive mine fields, position ASW forces, rely on fixed sensors and navigational beacons, select prepared positions with favorable acoustic conditions and await the U. S. SSN attacks. This synergistic effect would surely negate the technical superiority of the U. S. submarines. (6:49)

There would be considerable logistical problems encountered by the U. S. with each torpedo, cruise missile or mine expended. The U. S. resupply lines would be extended and targeted by most of the Soviet Fleet. In contrast, the Soviets would not only have a logistical advantage but easier communications and shorter transit times for their support vessels, which would further increase their combat effectiveness. The Maritime Strategy, in Caldwell's opinion, is a blueprint for disaster. It accommodates the Soviets by attacking their bastions and sacrifices our naval assets while having little chance for success. (6:51)

In summary then, Komer, Mearsheimer, Beatty, and Caldwell do not support the Maritime Strategy. For a variety of reasons ranging from logistical problems, to improper support of the allies and other national services, these critics claim the U. S. Navy's Maritime Strategy is too self-serving, and does not fulfill national defense objectives. While the validity of these claims are debatable, proponents of the Maritime Strategy believe there is great merit in the new strategy.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SOVIET PERSPECTIVE

If the study of military history has taught military strategists anything, it is that your adversary rarely follows what is expected of him in wartime. In his article titled "Blitzkrieg at Sea", Captain T. A. Fitzgerald, USN, explains how difficult it is to predict what the Soviets will do at war's outbreak. He believes that an examination of Soviet doctrine and practices during their training exercises will not reveal the true Soviet wartime strategy. In the 1970s former Commander of the Soviet Navy, Admiral Gorshkov, stated the fleet's major purpose is to protect the Russian homeland and the ballistic missile submarines. For Gorshkov the primary capital ship of the Soviet fleet was the submarine--a sea-denial weapon. (10:35) Thus, based on current Soviet maritime exercises and Gorshkov's doctrine, most U. S. strategists believe the Soviet Navy is a sea-denial force. (10:34) Indeed the Soviet Navy has over 2,000 surface ships designed for antisubmarine warfare (ASW) and anti-air warfare (AAW). This reinforces the belief that the Soviet fleet's primary mission is to defend their home waters and protect their ballistic nuclear submarines.

The Soviet Navy is divided into four major fleets-- the Northern, Baltic, Pacific and Black Sea Fleets. Although this is a formidable force, the fleets face geographic obstacles that hinder concentration of forces for large scale offensive operations. The narrow seas are icebound during most of the year and in some cases access to open ocean is controlled by NATO allies. Since the Soviet Union is a continental power whose major opponent has significant maritime offensive power, they should be expected to react and employ their naval forces in the following manner: First, they will keep most of the fleet in home waters. Second, they will fight out to 2,000 kilometers of the coasts so Soviet naval air, which is primarily land-based, can provide proper support. Third, they will attack and exact as much attrition as possible and then return to home waters. Fourth, they will protect the flanks and support the Red Army. Fifth, they will prevent U. S. forces from establishing operating bases on the periphery of the Soviet homeland. (10:35)

Soviet leadership realized that a stalemate at sea would interrupt the U. S. and allied forces' ability to pressure the Soviet flanks and delay the Atlantic resupply of NATO. With their overwhelming land forces, the Soviet could then win in Europe. However, the U. S. and allied fleets have demonstrated their ability as an offensive

attack force capable of penetrating Soviet maritime defenses. Strike Fleet's carrier battle groups present an incredibly tough challenge for the Soviets. To force stalemate at sea would be a major achievement for the Soviet Navy.

What if the Soviet Navy is not used as a sea-denial fleet and is instead employed as a "risk fleet"? The Soviets know they must defeat Europe quickly and to do so would require speed, surprise and the ability to mask their attacking forces. This could be accomplished by masking an attack in previously announced exercises or maneuvers. If the Soviets are considering a land blitzkrieg as postulated in the book, Soviet Blitzkrieg Theory, then what is the role of their navy? Based on this blitzkrieg rationale, one strategist, Captain Fitzgerald, believes the Soviet Navy could be employed as a "risk fleet". This blitzkrieg navy could pose an interesting alternative to the sea-denial strategy for the Soviet leadership. (10:36)

Captain Fitzgerald states, because the Soviet flanks are vulnerable, Allied naval assaults provide a major deterrent to the Soviets launching an attack on Europe. Attacks by U. S. and NATO allies on the Soviet flanks could achieve significant pressure on the Central Front. In Fitzgerald's opinion:

The primary force available to the allies is the U. S. carrier fleet. Eliminate, neutralize, or significantly degrade the carrier force, and the threat is removed. Could a sea-denial strategy achieve this goal? No, but an all-out blitzkrieg -style assault might. (10:36)

To execute effectively the naval blitzkrieg strategy, the Soviets must overcome significant obstacles. They must know the precise location of the U. S. carriers. Then they must position, undetected, their fleet within striking distance of the CVEGs. Fitzgerald believes this could be done and would provide the Soviets a tremendous advantage of surprise. The decision to execute an invasion of Europe would be based on a Soviet leadership belief that they would be better off at war than at peace. In Fitzgerald's view, the greatest use for the Soviet Navy in time of war would be as a blitzkrieg attack against U. S. carriers. (10:38) Thus, the U. S. Navy should remind themselves that they are a major objective of a Soviet land and naval blitzkrieg strategy and prepare properly for this form of Maritime Warfare.

Tom Clancy's novel, Red Storm Rising, offers support to Captain Fitzgerald's opinion that the Soviet fleet could become an offensive, rather than a defensive, sea-denial fleet. Clancy shows that by going on the offensive, the Soviets could seize the combat initiative and dictate terms in the North Atlantic. Clancy states

there are three reasons for this offensive strategy. First, the Soviets could prevent an American naval attack against the homeland. Second, the Soviets could use the majority of Soviet submarines in the North Atlantic to destroy NATO SLOCs. Third, this strategy would provide proper use of Soviet naval aviation. As Clancy's book shows, the Soviet Navy has become offensively oriented rather than defensive. (8:46) To be effective, the Navy's new Maritime Strategy needs to assess this Soviet perspective and consider all the available options. Would the Soviet Navy remain on the offensive or would they, as these authors suggest, attack with a blitzkrieg offensive?

## CHAPTER V

### THE ALLIED PERSPECTIVE

The Maritime Strategy is supported by the NATO membership and the Allies welcome the commitment of U. S. naval forces. The pressure which the U. S. and its allies could place upon the Northern Flank would aid NATO defensive efforts in Central Europe. Indeed the British Royal Navy wholeheartedly supports the U. S. Maritime Strategy. But because of its size, the British would not be able to assist in the global aspect of the strategy. In a recent U.S. Naval Proceedings article, Commander S. V. Mackay, Royal Navy, totally endorsed the U. S. Maritime Strategy. Commander Mackay believes that CVBGs would help sustain cohesion in the NATO alliance. Without sufficient numbers of CVBGs, some forces may be shifted out of the Mediterranean and into the Norwegian Sea during increased world tension. Consequently, southern NATO members may perceive these transfers as a shift in NATO priorities to the Northern Flank. (19:82-83) Commander Mackay suggests the carrier battle groups should be taken from other theaters such as the Pacific to prevent such perceptions. This assertion by Mackay seems to support the U. S. Navy's proposal that they need 15 carrier battle groups.

The NATO allies support the objectives of the U. S. Maritime Strategy of seizing the initiative from the Soviets and deploying CVBGs forward of the "GIUK gap". The forward deployment of U. S. naval forces would be reinforced by allied surface combatants and U. K. nuclear attack submarines. However, these NATO naval forces should not wait for the U. S. naval fleet. They must forward deploy and proceed to bottle up the Soviet fleet. If the Allies wait, they would be faced with fighting their way into the Norwegian Sea to recover Norwegian bases. "The initiative must be taken early", says Mackay. (19:86)

According to Mackay, naval forces would require greater basing and support from Norway than what presently exists. He believes the U. S. should deploy a CVBG in the Norwegian Sea on a more permanent basis. This would force the Norwegians to make a firmer political commitment to the Maritime Strategy. (19:87)

Mackay believes it would be folly to deploy surface ships of the antisubmarine warfare (ASW) striking force far north of the GIUK gap without adequate air defense forces provided by the CVBGs. Therefore a prime requirement would exist for the near-permanent stationing of a U. S. CVBG in the Norwegian Sea. This action should be a precondition before the U. K. and other NATO allies

adopt the Maritime Strategy fully, states Commander Mackay.

The strategic importance of Norway increased with the introduction of the U. S. Maritime Strategy. As long as the U. S. chose to confront the Soviet Navy along the GIUK gap and not further north in the Norwegian Sea, Norway was considered not as critical. The official Norwegian reaction to the Maritime Strategy has been positive but restrained. According to Norwegian Captain J. Boerresen, the reason for this restraint is partly historical. One of the most important goals of Norway is to maintain a low level of tension, which the forward deployed U. S. CVBGs threaten to change. Increased U. S. naval presence may cause the Soviet fleet to augment their deployments in the Norwegian Sea, thus changing the balance between deterrence and reassurance. Norwegians are sensitive to the increased presence of the CVBGs and the resulting need to establish some form of supporting infrastructure in Norway. This is perceived by the Norwegians as a new pressure on their existing basing policy. The prepositioning of U. S. Marine Corps supplies and equipment can be seen as a change to the basing policy. However, the central goal of Norwegian security policy will continue to be the maintenance of low tension in the Nordic region. (2:14-16)

Overall key NATO maritime nations support the Maritime Strategy. The two allied nations bordering the Norwegian Sea (Norway and Britain) believe this strategy has merit. Although the British cannot deploy ships out of the Atlantic theater in support of the strategy, they are committed to the defense of the Norwegian Sea. While the Norwegians are more cautious, they too have endorsed this forward deployment concept.

CHAPTER VI  
CONCLUSIONS

The U. S. Navy's new Maritime Strategy is the maritime component of the U. S. National Military Strategy. If executed in cooperation with sister services and allies, it could be a winning strategy. Yet power projection by maritime forces can only be accomplished after control of the seas is secured, and this is dependent on both Soviet priorities and NATO capabilities.

The U. S. Maritime Strategy's primary emphasis is on seizing the initiative from the Soviets. Recent advances in antisubmarine warfare and weapon system technology by the U. S. naval forces places greater pressure on the Soviets. However, by adopting a defensive posture, the U. S. would lose this technological superiority by allowing the enemy the option of choosing the time and place for naval engagements. In contrast, taking the offensive and forward deploying the CVEGs before hostilities, will properly exploit this technological advantage and increase the cost to the Soviets.

The philosophy of strategic offensive employment of naval forces is in itself an element of deterrence. Thus the U. S. cannot afford a defensive posture which would forfeit the defense of Norway or any other NATO

ally, since this would provide an opening for the Soviets to degrade the NATO alliance.

John Lehman stated the Maritime Strategy would be a counterveiling strategy, based on attacking the enemy's weakness and applying global pressures against the Soviets. The Maritime Strategy's deterrence value is promulgated upon denying the enemy his objectives by raising the cost of victory to a point that is unacceptable. Thus, the U. S. Navy must go after the Soviet fleet rather than remaining in defensive positions along the GIUK gap. They must push the Soviet Navy back into their icy home waters and force the Soviet SSNs into a defensive posture of protecting their strategic nuclear missiles submarines, and the Kola Peninsula. To protect the Northern Flank of Europe, Norway must be held and the Norwegian Sea controlled.

U. S. control of the Norwegian Sea would be accomplished with surface and subsurface forces which must be protected by carrier air. Carrier aircraft could also strike the Soviet homeland targets and tie down Soviet forces which otherwise would be diverted to the central front. Bottled up in the Barents Sea, the Soviet Navy would be unable to effectively interrupt the resupply of NATO. Without a doubt it is to the U. S. and NATO's

advantage to fight a war on the periphery of the Soviet homeland and not just in central Europe.

In order to successfully execute the Maritime Strategy, three prerequisites must be met. First, the United States must exercise the political will to commit the naval forces early enough to forward deploy into Norway and the Norwegian Sea. If this is not done prior to the outbreak of hostilities, then the U. S. Navy would have to fight its way back into the Norwegian Sea at a later time. If committed early enough, these forces could act as a deterrent by demonstrating U. S. resolve and a commitment to NATO. Second, ships must be available, in sufficient quantity and mix, to execute the strategy. Since the Maritime Strategy is global, sufficient justification has been made for approximately 600 ships composed of 15 CVBGs. As the numbers and types of ships are reduced from the required level, the risks will increase. Third, the U. S. intelligence community must be able to provide at least five to seven days advance notice of the possible outbreak of war. This advance notice will allow the CVBGs off the East Coast of the U. S. time to forward deploy into the Norwegian Sea.

If any one of these three prerequisites is not met, then alternative strategies must be examined. One of the alternatives is offered by Dr. Donald Chipman, who is

on the faculty at Air University, Maxwell AFB. Dr. Chipman proposes that the U. S. Navy rethink the forward strategy and examine a distant blockade along the GIUK Gap.

A five day delay in the arrival of U. S. naval forces would allow the Soviets time to establish a force in the Norwegian Sea and ambush the approaching CVBGs.

Thus Dr. Chipman states:

Given five days of advanced maneuvers before the carrier approaches the Norwegian Sea, the Soviets could mine extensively, deploy numerous submarines, use their MIG 29s to cover their Backfires and Badgers, and attack in mass. Presumably, even two carriers with all their complementary ships would find this type of opposition formidable. (7:82)

According to Dr. Chipman, the Maritime Strategy focuses on the objective of seeking out the Soviet Navy and trying to match mass against mass in a decisive naval engagement. This objective tends to lose sight of the acknowledged primary NATO naval objectives--protecting the NATO resupply SLOCs. (7:83) The alternative strategy presented by Dr. Chipman is a sensible, well thought out approach based on historical perspectives and the flexible use of defensive--offensive tactics.' Thus Dr. Chipman proposes:

...NATO forces would begin the war with a defensive strategy, using the GIUK Gap as a base and then evolving into an offensive strategy. This would buy time to allow the various carriers to assemble and then, if necessary, advance into the Norwegian Sea.

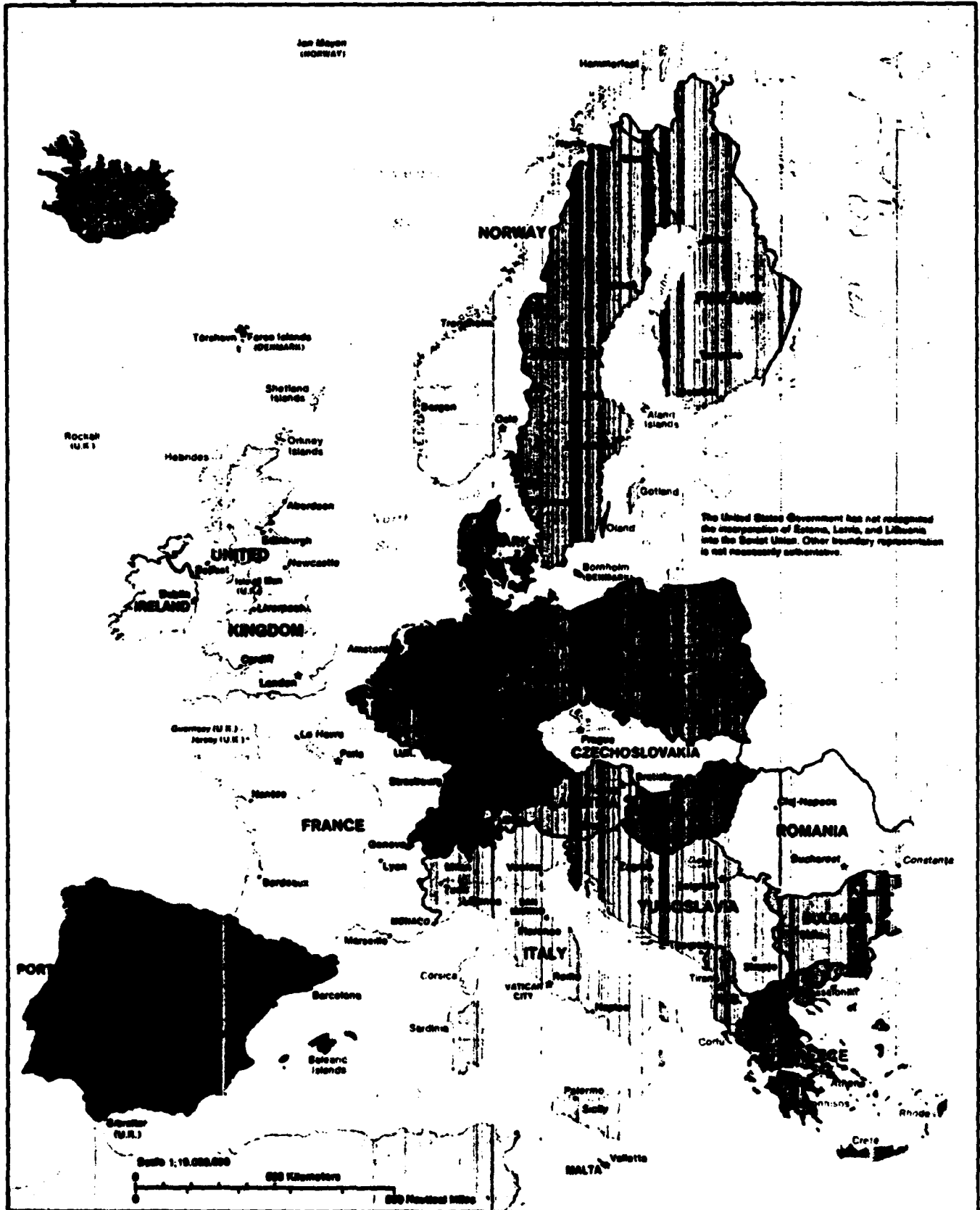
Once there, the advancing carriers could carry out the current forward strategy. (7:88)

A second alternative to the Maritime Strategy is based on the assumption that massing CVGBs will not arrive in time to prevent the Soviet Fleet from advancing south into the Norwegian Sea. The permanent assignment of a CVBG in the North Atlantic, operating along the GIUK Gap and Norwegian Sea, would provide the necessary forces to defend Norway and the NATO SLOCs until the arrival of additional CVBGs from the U. S. East Coast. The presence alone of a CVBG would provide an element of deterrence for the Soviet leadership and strengthen the NATO alliance by showing U. S. commitment and resolve not to forfeit Norway. If war should erupt, then the CVBG and other NATO naval forces could fight a five day defensive battle in the Norwegian Sea until the arrival of other CVBGs. This alternative would allow NATO to maintain the initiative and, once all CVBGs are assembled, be in a good position to carry out the stated objectives of the forward Maritime Strategy.

The Maritime Strategy is a winning strategy and as Admiral Trost states, it must also be a flexible strategy. We cannot afford to concentrate on one area of the world at the expense of another. The Soviet naval threat is growing and their largest fleet is in the

Pacific. With the acquisition of Soviet nuclear submarines by India, it would appear that the Pacific theater requires equal consideration. After all, seven of the ten worldwide naval choke points are in the Pacific theater and, as Mr. Gorbachev has stated in his famous Vladivostok speech, the Pacific has the same priority as Western Europe. (11:707)

# Europe



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