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NAVAL ARMS CONTROL -- CAN THE UNITED STATES CONTINUE TO "JUST SAY NO?"

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by

CDR Ray C. Pilcher, Jr., USN

National War College

Fort Leslie J. McNair

Washington, D.C. 20319-6000

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NAVAL ARMS CONTROL--CAN THE UNITED STATES CONTINUE TO "JUST SAY NO?"

When the animals had gathered, the lion looked at the eagle and said gravely, "We must abolish talons." The tiger looked at the elephant and said, "We must abolish tusks." The elephant looked back at the tiger and said, "We must abolish claws and jaws." Thus each animal in turn proposed the abolition of the weapons he did not have, until at last the bear rose up and said in tones of sweet reasonableness: "Comrades, let us abolish everything -- everything but the great universal embrace."

*Attributed to Winston Churchill,
1874-1965*

INTRODUCTION

We live in a world of change unmatched since World War II. Yesterday's impossible obstacle is today's accomplishment. Communist governments are dropping like fall leaves--with communism, as we know it, in desperate trouble, even in the Soviet Union. We are very close to reaching agreement on major strategic arms reduction and European conventional force treaties and are already witnessing the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Amidst the obvious lessening of tensions and reductions in forces, the Soviet Union presses for discussions on naval arms control. At every turn the United States replies, "No!" The question is clear: Is this stance, which flies in the face of obvious trends, justifiable and in the United States' best interest?

Naval arms control, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. The United States Navy intends to maintain its preeminence. Shipbuilders fear reduction or elimination of business. Ecologists see an opportunity to eliminate nuclear weapons at sea. For budgeteers there is a chance to increase the "peace dividend," while diplomats hope to reduce world tensions and the chance of war. Although the views of each group requires consideration, our decision on naval arms control--a little, a lot, or none--should be based on the strategic interests of the United States. Just what is this "sea power" that we're considering limiting?

SEA POWER

Control of the sea means security. Control of the sea means peace. Control of the sea can mean victory. The United States must control the sea if it is to protect our security.

*John F. Kennedy: To All Hands,
USS Kitty Hawk, June 1963*

Sea power is simply a measure of a country's ability to use the sea. It is not about the direct military effect of fighting ships, which is the realm of tactics; it is about the use of maritime lines of communication for the effective interconnection, organization, and purposeful application of the economic and war making potential of many lands.¹

Economic Use of the Sea

Man's interest in the sea, and hence the interests of nations, is almost wholly interests of carriage, that is, trade. Maritime commerce, in all ages, has been most fruitful of wealth. Wealth is a concrete expression of a nation's energy of life, material and thinking. Given the relation between wealth and maritime commerce, the sea is inevitably the major arena of competition and conflict among nations aspiring to wealth and power.

*William Reitzel, "Mahan on the Use of the Sea,"
in Military Strategy: Theory and Applications*

Economic use of the sea can bring great wealth to a country, but it also creates vulnerabilities. Normally, the greater the benefit to the state's economy, the more harsh the effect of loss, and, therefore, the greater the need for protection. As the need to protect the benefit rises, so does the expense a state will incur to provide protection.

Ideally protection is simply a viable deterrent: the forces and will to use them that dissuades an adversary from adventurism. To be effective, deterrent forces must be available in a timely

manner and capable of response proportionate to the transgression. Securing the economic use of the sea is one aspect of sea power. There are more direct military applications of sea power.

Military Use of the Sea

During tension or war, it is often necessary to relocate large quantities of men and supplies across seas. The movement often is threaten with attack, particularly when adequate naval force isn't available for protection. The inability to move the men and supplies safely will usually strongly affect the outcome of the confrontation.

For hundreds of years states' power was projected to foreign shores to reinforce or capture territory. Equipment and procedures perfected during and since World War II enhanced this aspect of sea power. Similarly, tactical bombardment of enemy positions by naval forces using guns, missiles, and carrier-based aviation became important aspects of states' ability to project their power militarily. The ultimate power projection is the ability to deter war by threatening catastrophic damage on the enemy's homeland.

Alliances and Sea Power

Naval power can be an important component of alliances. The members of the alliance often are separated by large oceans where providing mutual support depends on resupplying by sea. Regular naval coordination shows the solidarity of the alliance and deters an adversary from attempting to isolate and eliminate weaker members. The ability of naval forces to project support-ing power (to include nuclear deterrence) often provides the backbone of the alliance.

GEOSTRATEGY AND THE NATIONAL MILITARY CHARACTER

With many calculations, one can win; with few one can not. How much less chance of victory has one who makes none at all! By this means I examine the situation and the outcome will be clearly apparent.

Sun Tzu, 400-320 B.C., The Art of War

Geography

Each country has its own geographic view of the world and its friends and enemies. This view is colored by its degree of development and its history. Geography, therefore, is not the sole determining factor in military strategy. At times, it influences decisions just as do the factors of politics and economics. Often, a nation may override geographic constraints, if it is willing to pay the political and economic price. In this regard, geographic location, distance between nations, or national boundaries influences or determines the adoption of certain courses of action.²

Military Character

Geography, resources, alliances, history, and tradition all play important parts in shaping a state's military character. One need only consult a map to see the striking geographic differences between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Some critical differences include:

- ▷ The USSR's land mass is almost twice that of the United States
- ▷ The entire Soviet land mass is contiguous while the United States has two detached states and several detached territories.
- ▷ The Soviet Union imports few natural resources or finished goods and is almost self-sufficient in basic energy and strategic requirements. The United States is a heavy importer in both categories.

- ▷ Most Soviet trade is overland while most American trade, the world's largest, is by sea. Seaborne trade for the Soviet Union is not a matter of national survival, but the United States is critically dependent on seaborne trade for economic survival.³
- ▷ With few exceptions, friends and alliance partners of the Soviet Union can be supported by land. On the other hand, the United States is separated from its major alliance and trading partners by the world's great oceans.

The Soviet Union

The fundamental differences in geostrategic setting define the national military character for both nations. The geopolitical fact of location in the heart of the Eurasian landmass and the political fact of contiguous threats and enemies, historically dictated that Moscow focus first on land power. Naval and later air power were developed to complement the land power and to integrate with it, not to challenge it.⁴ Mahan considered the vast Russian empire to have the strengths and weaknesses of a great land power. To reach the sea, the Russians have to overcome obstacles imposed by geography and by the capabilities of the maritime states.⁵ A classic "continental power," her history is dominated by overland invasion and massive land war. Her military is controlled by the army--both in numbers and seniority. The Soviet Navy's primary functions are coastal defense and protection of the naval strategic reserve force (ballistic missile submarines).

The United States

Conversely, the geographic reality for the United States is that many of our allies and trading partners are located on the periphery of the Eurasian land mass, isolated from the United States by two great oceans. Although air travel and transportation is increasingly critical, most American trade and alliance support is by sea; therefore, the United States relies on maritime activities and freedom of navigation under international law to protect its security and trade interests.

Maritime Versus Continental Heritage

Two hundred years ago, navies existed primarily to support peaceful shipping. Once created, a navy took on roles besides its basic role: The navy became an instrument of national policy. Wherever seaborne commerce expanded the nation's contacts beyond its shores, the navy was there consolidating interests and establishing political influence. Western maritime countries such as Great Britain, Spain, Italy, Japan, and the United States have rich maritime traditions. The same can't be said for Russia (Soviet Union). Without economic necessity, their naval efforts lacked dedication and achieved little success.

Mahan points out nations that, seeking to develop seaforce without significant seapower interests (economic), create distrust and anxiety among their fellow nations. The creation of such a force automatically is threatening in international life. The policy cannot fail to stimulate serious concern and, perhaps, vigorous defensive action in already developed maritime states, since it implies not commercial competition, but armed threat.⁶ This is how the surging Soviet Navy of the 1970s and 1980s was viewed by the NATO maritime states.

There is clearly a great divergence between requirements for and utilization of naval forces by western maritime nations and the Soviet Union. The asymmetries of maritime missions and forces, like the geostrategic asymmetries they flow from, are a fact of life.

The World's Policeman

The United States was the world's dominant power by the end of World War II. With Great Britain economically exhausted and inferior in forces, the U.S. inherited the job as the world's oceanic policeman. Maintaining a continuous forward deployed posture, the U.S. Navy provided the maritime security for rebuilding and newly developing nations. Fueled with American resources and able to count on safe maritime trade and good security at little or no national expense, their economies thrived. During much of this period, the Soviet Navy seldom was seen. It provided only minimal naval support for other coastal Warsaw Pact nations and has never functioned as the "cop on the beat."

NAVAL ARMS CONTROL--WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

One can never foresee the consequences of political negotiations undertaken under the influence of military eventualities.

Napoleon I: I Political Aphorisms, 1848

World Assumptions

A practical discussion of naval arms control is only possible in the context of the world environment. Although we live in a period of rapid change with deeds outpacing predictions, some reasonable assumptions about the future are possible:

- ▷ The world will be made up of nations, which despite alliances, will pursue individual national goals.
- ▷ The individual national goals will, at times, conflict.
- ▷ The vast majority of the nations will remain armed.
- ▷ Armed force will continue as a persuasive element in confrontations short of war.
- ▷ Armed forces (yours or those of a good ally) form the ultimate basis for national security.

Categories of Naval Arms Controls

There are many ways of categorizing arms control objectives. Functional breakdowns center on the type of limitation imposed, such as geographic constraints or vessel inventory restrictions. More general is a categorization based on the desired effect of the naval arms control initiative. Christoph Bertram⁷ identified three such broad categories:

- ▷ Reduce the likelihood of war,
- ▷ Limit the damage in war,

- ▷ Reduce the cost of preparation for war.

Two more categories are needed in today's environment:

- ▷ Reduce the likelihood of accidental injury and environmental damage during peacetime,
- ▷ Limit the ability to affect the actions of other nations by exerting military pressure.

There are, of course, many more desired effects, but most can be considered as subcategories. For example, "increased stability" or "improved predictability" should "reduce the likelihood of war."

It is hard to argue with the theoretical desirability of achieving these broad objectives: they sound reasonable to most men. However, let's look closer.

Effects of Naval Arms Control

Successful naval arms control agreements implement mechanisms that positively contribute to one of our categories without negatively affecting another. It sounds simple---and it might be---if not for the differing requirements of individual national strategies.

Digging into the complexities of the world, we find the measures of success for arms control are neither the achievement of an agreement nor the reduction in weapon arsenals. Instead, such measures must assess the impact of arms control on:⁸

- ▷ Deterrence.
- ▷ The ability to defend against aggression.
- ▷ The use of force in situations short of war.
- ▷ Alliance cohesion.
- ▷ Crises.
- ▷ The arms race and political stability.
- ▷ Domestic support for adequate defenses.

Condensed, any arms control initiative must improve the security posture for all participants.

Unfortunately, improving security for all participants is difficult. Arms control, by its very

process of negotiation and debate, seeks to do better than a zero-sum game; both sides are to win, as far as their security is concerned.⁹

Arms control thrives during periods of good international relations: times when it is actually less needed. But good arms control agreements contribute to good international relations. There is no chicken or the egg situation here--seldom do arms control agreements arrive during periods of tensions and distrust. In fact, "I trust you" is one of the most important phrases that can be said in any relationship. Between nations, it can never be said lightly or without evidence, usually of long standing, to back it. In the arms control field, it cannot be reached without a history of honored agreements and continuing demonstrated intent.¹⁰ Trust is wonderful and helpful in establishing a fertile negotiation ground; however, seldom is it considered adequate insurance for compliance with arms control agreements.

History of Naval Arms Control

There have been many treaties and conventions over the years that can be considered forms of naval arms control. A brief review of some more noteworthy is useful to provide a historical perspective.

The Declaration of Paris in 1856 sought to formalize in international law the naval concepts of blockade and contraband. The declaration established that, to be lawful, blockade must be declared, continuous, and effective; and that neither enemy goods in neutral ships, nor neutral goods in enemy ships, could be condemned as prize unless they were contraband of war.¹¹

The Declaration of London in 1909 amplified the principles of the Paris declaration. The concepts of both treaties were sound when drafted during a more gentlemanly era of naval warfare. Unfortunately, neither stood up well under the unrestricted submarine warfare of World War I.

The Hague Conference of 1907 produced twelve instruments, eight with naval ramifications. Four of these again dealt with blockade and contraband. Another extended the provisions of the 1864 Geneva Convention on the Care of the Wounded to the maritime theater. The last three dealt

with the conversion of merchant vessels to warships, rules for automatic contact mines, and a prohibition of the bombardment by naval forces of undefended towns under most conditions. Again, however, the complications of real life and exigencies of war very largely defeated the good intentions of the convention during the First World War.¹²

The Washington Conference of 1921-22. Riding a crest of public opinion, the world rapidly moved toward arms reduction. In early 1921 the U.S. Congress overwhelmingly passed a joint resolution favoring a disarmament conference. Hosted by the United States in the person of Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes and attended by delegations from Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, the conference met in Washington on 12 November 1921.

At the first session, Secretary Hughes astonished the listeners by proposing dramatic ship cuts (even listing them by name) and a ten-year "holiday" in capital ship construction. He further proposed tonnage limitations based on strict ratios. His audacity stunned everyone and one Britain observed dourly, "Secretary Hughes sunk in 35 minutes more ships than all the admirals of the world have sunk in a cycle of centuries."¹³

As a concession to Japan, the United States and Great Britain agreed to insertion in the final treaty of the controversial non-fortification clause. It froze fortification of most American, British and Japanese facilities in the Pacific.

The Second London Conference of 1935-6 took place in an atmosphere of apprehension rather than idealism and ended with a useless agreement between the United States, Great Britain, and France. Japan failed in its quest for full parity and withdrew. Great Britain had already concluded a bilateral treaty with Germany in 1935 where Germany agreed to severe tonnage limits in return for parity in submarines--a decision Britain soon come to regret.¹⁴

The results of the force structure limitations embodied in the naval arms control instruments of the interwar period have been extensively debated, and even in hindsight many of their effects are by no means clear. Certainly they didn't avert war. By weakening deterrent forces, they may

have hastened it. Japan's expansion appears aided, at least morally, by the fortification limitations in the Pacific. The clear winner was Germany, the continental power, who enjoyed almost unlimited construction of submarines while her potential opponents watched.

SOVIET NAVAL ARMS CONTROL PROPOSALS

"For over 30 years the Soviet Union has persisted in pursuing limitations and unreasonable restrictions on the undergirding strength of the United States and our NATO and Pacific allies--and that is our naval power.... Soviet efforts to coerce the United States into engaging in naval arms talks have intensified in the last four years. We have seen no less than 20 formal and informal appeals from various spokesmen."

*Admiral C. A. H. Trost, USN
Chief of Naval Operations*

Why the Soviet Push Now?

It is necessary to understand the reasons behind the recent Soviet concentrated efforts to initiate naval arms control discussions to effectively analyze the proposals. Tales of desperate Soviet economic woes abound. Certainly perestroika, glasnost and the need to divert precious resources from the military into the civilian economy is reason enough for a sincere Soviet effort. But, is there even more beneath the surface?

Ogarkov's Perestroika. In 1982, five years before President Gorbachev made perestroika a household word, Marshall of the Soviet Union Nikolay V. Ogarkov appealed for "perestroika" of the Soviet Armed Forces and, in support of their mobilization and warfighting readiness, for restructuring of "the entire economy, [as well as] political, societal, scientific, and other institutions."¹⁵ Amidst the domestic stagnation of the Brezhnev years and against the backdrop of resurgent American strength, Ogarkov showed deep concern with the USSR's ability to keep pace

with the "truly revolutionary transformations of military affairs now occurring because of the development of thermonuclear weapons, the rapid evolution of electronics and weapons based on new physical principles, as well as the wide, qualitative improvements in conventional weaponry."¹⁶

For many years the Soviet military struggled to maintain superiority or, at least parity, with the West. Utilizing a much larger portion of the country's GNP for military expenses, they historically concentrated on quantity to overcome technological deficiencies. But, as the West's economic and technology leads over the Soviet Union widened, desperate measures were necessary.

Ogarkov viewed four significant obstacles that had to be overcome to restructure the country to avoid a serious military decline:

- ▷ The ingrained resistance of the Soviet bureaucracy to any change.
- ▷ The Soviet military establishment's tendency to cling to the past -- planning to fight the last war.
- ▷ The inability of the Soviet economy to produce the necessary quantity and quality of high-technology weaponry necessary to keep pace in the peacetime competition and win on the battlefield.
- ▷ The inability of the Soviet society to produce the sophisticated, fit, and committed citizens who the military needs to fight and win on the modern battlefield.¹⁷

In short, Ogarkov saw nation-threatening problems that the Soviet system in its early-1980s form could not solve. He felt "mere modifications and adjustments can no longer produce the desired results."¹⁸ "A departure from the very foundation of existing constructs and creation of a new quality on a principally new basis" was needed.¹⁹ He advocated a complete review of the Soviet political and strategic objectives, the requirements versus needs of the Soviet military, and how the Soviet military would fight. Ogarkov may well have been the father of Gorbachev's perestroika. He advocated peaceful measures such as arms control to hold the West back while the Soviets regrouped to catch up.

Gorbachev's Objectives. President Gorbachev probably found few flaws with Ogarkov's general analysis of the endemic problems in the Soviet Union. A central manifestation of the Soviet Union's problems, internal and external, is the failure of communist economies. Marxism-Leninism teaches that, in war, the superior economy will win.²⁰ The extreme Soviet need to solve its economic problems lead to many of Gorbachev's changes since taking power.

Although most agree that changes far outpaced expectations, President Gorbachev started the reorganization with a plan in mind. The basic plan suited the needs of the military:

- ▷ Fix the economy using several methods.
 - ✓ Allow increased market economy principles.
 - ✓ Reduce allocation of resources to the military.
 - ✓ Increased access to Western technology.
 - ✓ Increase Western financial investment.
- ▷ Engender goodwill with the West by a less aggressive foreign policy, reduced offensive military posture and more national openness to:
 - ✓ Gain a military strategic pause.
 - ✓ Gain access to resources and technology.
 - ✓ Improve the climate for delaying tactics such as arms control.
- ▷ Improve the long-term correlation of forces by:
 - ✓ Modernization by eliminating outdated equipment.
 - ✓ Reduction in forces reallocating resources.
 - ✓ Reduce nuclear capability based on principle of "reasonable sufficiency."
 - ✓ Advantageous use of arms control agreements.

The implications for the military of perestroika are clear: while economy and society are being restructured, Soviet foreign policy acts to stabilize the international environment. Thereby, the military is accorded a most precious commodity--time: time to build within a somewhat stable

threat environment, against an extended and fairly predictable planning horizon, and an opponent who is constrained by arms control and domestic imperatives from racing ahead to field his technological advantages.²¹ One of the most effective and least costly methods of holding the West back so the Soviets could catch up was arms control, including naval, possible under the good feelings created with perestroika.

The United States' View. Admiral Trost recently discussed the United States' view of the Soviet's motivation for naval arms control as:²²

- ▷ Attempts to gain unequal concessions from the United States by giving up systems of little or no value in return for the United States giving up modern, capable, and operating units.
- ▷ Attempts to improve the Soviet Union's relative advantage in areas where they and their allies already maintain superiority--specifically in land power. The proposals fail to recognize the fundamental differences between a continental power and a maritime power.
- ▷ Attempts to reduce the United States sphere of influence around the world, and thus increase our vulnerability to trade interruption. Additionally, this would lead to increased world instability.

Collectively, they are viewed as efforts to overcome United States' naval superiority and to weaken the United States' sea links with allies.

The Soviet Proposals

Analysis of the Soviet Union's geopolitical situation and their proposals suggests the following possible military objectives:²³

- ▷ Keep maritime forces of adversaries at arms length.
- ▷ Denuclearize the maritime environment (except submarine launched ballistic missiles).

- ▷ Offset or negate the effects of the technological advantages of the West.
- ▷ Eliminate imbalances in naval force numbers.

By proposing limits on naval forces and operations while reducing their own out-of-area ship-days, the Soviets may hope to raise political (and budgetary) doubts in the United States and elsewhere about the need for a 600-ship navy, the United States Navy's Maritime Strategy, the general United States' strategy of maintaining forward deployed forces in peacetime, and maintaining an associated overseas base network.²⁴

The Soviets have made many official and unofficial naval arms control proposals over the years. Functionally, they fall into three groups (some specific proposals are listed):

- ▷ Limits on inventories to include platforms and weapon systems (the proposed limit could be zero).
 - ✓ Freezing or mutually reducing naval force levels. Specifically, the Soviets suggested a reduction in United States' aircraft carriers in exchange for a reduction in Soviet attack submarines.
 - ✓ Eliminating nuclear weapons (except submarine launched ballistic missiles) from naval ships.
 - ✓ Banning or limiting all sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs).
- ▷ Limits on deployments and areas of operations (may specify particular platforms or weapon systems).
 - ✓ Establishing oceanic areas where antisubmarine warfare is prohibited (ASW Free Zones).
 - ✓ Establishing areas where nuclear weapons are banned (Nuclear Weapon Free Zones).
 - ✓ Limiting or banning naval operations in international straits and major shipping lanes.
 - ✓ Mutually withdrawing or freezing naval force levels in selected oceanic areas such as the Mediterranean Sea, Baltic Sea, and Indian Ocean (or the closing of United

States' Navy facilities at Subic Bay in exchange for similar Soviet actions at Cam Ranh Bay).

- ✓ Establishing minimum coastal standoff distances for land-offensive capable naval units.
- ▷ Confidence and security building measures (CSBMs).
 - ✓ Exchanging information on naval forces, construction, and doctrine.
 - ✓ Limiting the number, scale, and geographic location of major naval exercises. Requiring early advance notification of the exercises.
 - ✓ Permitting official observers for announced naval exercises.
 - ✓ Adding provisions and broadening the participants to the 1972 U.S.-Soviet Incidents at Sea agreement.

Analysis

As originally stated, a fair analysis of these and other proposals can only be done in light of the national strategic interests of the parties, taking into account their geopolitical situations. Clearly neither side would willingly agree to provisions not in their best interest. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume the Soviets view their proposals as being in their best interest. There are then two questions for the United States:

- ▷ Why do the Soviets feel the proposals are in their best interest?
- ▷ Are the proposals in the United States best interest?

From a "navy versus navy" perspective, the Soviets would consider any reasonable arms control agreement as a success: The simple event of the agreement would indicate a parity between the Soviet Navy and United States Navy and would open the naval arms control door. The U.S. Navy's opposition to any naval arms control discussions recognize both these points (the U.S. Navy's position reflects the official announced United States' government position on naval arms control).

Admiral Trost asserts that "seldom, if ever, has a traditional naval power such as the United

States, a nation dependent on the sea for security and economic survival, entered into naval arms negotiations and not lost ground."²⁵ Therefore, it isn't surprising the United States Navy views even a favorable agreement as dangerous--any agreement would undoubtedly open the door to the "slippery slope" of further naval arms control negotiations.

Additionally, the United States Navy resists any hint at parity with the Soviet Navy. As previously discussed, the missions and national criticality of the two navies is vastly different. It follows that the forces and methods required to accomplish the assigned missions also differs greatly. The U.S. Navy is concerned that a hint of parity between the two navies might be used as a basis for future negotiations. How does the United States Navy view some actual proposals?

Limits on Inventories Including Platforms or Weapon Systems. Class limits are very difficult: like ships don't fight each other (frigates fight submarines, attack submarines fight ballistic missile submarines and large surface ships, etc.). Additionally, ships within a class, even with the same hull design, vary greatly in capability. Different inventories by class are required by the two navies to support asymmetric missions. Establishing equality between different opposing classes (such as the Soviet proposed attack submarines for aircraft carriers) is extremely difficult.

The United States doesn't support eliminating nuclear weapons from naval ships. The loss of sea-based assets for land-attack would weaken the escalatory mechanism in NATO's strategy of flexible response. Compliance would be unverifiable without unacceptable intrusive inspections.

Banning or limiting sea-launched cruise missiles would again focus the U.S. Navy's seaborne strike capability on aircraft carriers greatly reducing the planning and warfighting effort for the Soviets. Again, compliance would be unverifiable without unacceptable intrusive inspections.²⁶

Limits on Deployments and Areas of Operations. Restrictions on the freedom of the seas and naval forces are asymmetrically disadvantageous for the Western alliances, reducing their operational flexibility²⁷ and negating natural geographical advantages in exchange for almost no

gains. Establishing anti-submarine warfare "free zones," in which ASW forces would be prohibited from operation would, in essence, provide immune bastions for operating Soviet ballistic missile submarines.²⁸ The U.S. Navy doesn't feel the need for similar provisions to protect its ballistic missile submarines deployed in the open oceans. Agreement to limit operations in any single area would establish a difficult precedent.

Confidence and Security Building Measures. Limitations on naval exercises in international waters are unnecessary and improper. The entire history of the United States Navy is one of preserving freedom of the seas. The limitations on land exercises, conducted on sovereign territory, are not properly extended to the non-sovereign environment of free seas.

THE WORLD AND DOMESTIC ATMOSPHERE

Democracy is the best system of government yet devised, but it suffers from one grave defect--it does not encourage those military virtues upon which, in an envious world, it must frequently depend for survival.

Major Guy du Maurier, 1865-1915

World relationships are more cordial and relaxed today than any time since the end of the Second World War. Those relations are dominated by the United States-Soviet Union relationship. Yet, both superpowers have large, well equipped strategic and conventional forces. What magic elixir caused these good relations? Who or what is different?

Although there is disagreement on the reasons, most agree tensions are lower because the threat to national security is lower. Understanding why the threat is lower is critical to naval arms control decisions. The United States' perception of the threat level can be simplistically represented as:

$$\text{THREAT} = \text{CAPABILITY} * \text{VULNERABILITY} * \text{INTENTIONS}$$

using the Soviet's capability and intentions and the United States' vulnerability. Since there hasn't been a major change in either the Soviet Union's capability or the United States' vulnerability, the dominant factor in the reduced threat level is a reduction in the Soviets' threat intentions. There are two further points to remember:

- ▷ The terms are multiplicative so any very high or low term greatly affects the resultant.
- ▷ Whereas capability and vulnerability are heavily related to hardware, intentions are based primarily on human decision and are, therefore, the most volatile. Threat levels dominated by intentions can change rapidly with the few advance indicators.

What do the reduced tensions/threat level mean for naval arms control? Recall the ironic twist discussed earlier: arms control is easiest during periods of good relations, but possibly less needed. In a democracy, the ultimate decision on arms control rests with the people. Today, public support, focused by:

- ▷ Reduced threat perception,
- ▷ Summit events,
- ▷ The INF Treaty and the expected completion of the START and CFE Treaties,
- ▷ Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika,
- ▷ Evolutionary political, economic, and ethnic dynamic in Eastern Europe, and
- ▷ Accelerated budgetary and defense fiscal constraints in both the United States and the Soviet Union,²⁹

is marching toward naval arms control and the interest can't be ignored.

Important members of Congress are speaking. Senator Sam Nunn, perhaps the most influential member on defense, said "I am confident that substantial savings will be possible in the level of defense spending requested in the FY 91 budget."³⁰ Senator John McCain, a former Navy

officer and staunch Navy supporter, writes that the current wave of support for arms control could lead the West to accept conventional arms reductions that do not allow it to maintain its current level of conventional deterrence and war fighting capability.³¹ Even Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr., the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the United States should consider negotiating with the Soviet Union; "If some naval reductions can get us more than they're worth, we ought to be willing to consider talking."³²

Despite the Navy's special place in the United States' geopolitical strategy, the thoughts of America are probably summarized in Time magazine.³³

The Navy should continue to play the central role in the global projection of U.S. might, though that should be possible with fewer aircraft carriers plus additional transport ships. It is also time for arms control talks to be expanded to include reducing naval forces.

UNITED STATES OPTIONS

It is impossible to frame a treaty of peace in such a manner as to find in it a decision of all questions which can arise between the parties concerned.

Sir Arthur Wellesley Wellington: Dispatch, 7 January 1804

No Negotiation--Just Say No!

This option essentially maintains the status quo. Naval force levels, weapons and operations would be alliance and nationally determined. Actual naval reductions, as the U.S. Navy is experiencing now, might occur as a result of budgetary pressures and reduced threat perception, or, under different circumstances, build-ups could occur. For reference purpose only, consider this "market arms control," where forces and operations respond to "market" influences like threat level and

budgetary pressure.

Many believe this is actually the fastest form of arms control under the right conditions. If arms are reduced by agreement, both sides will strain to ensure that all dangers and contingencies are covered; and they will naturally try, if possible, to come out with the better deal. Reduction is certainly possible under these circumstances, but it is likely to be slow and inflexible.³⁴ Reduction proceeds most expeditiously if each side feels free to reverse any reduction it later comes to regret.³⁵

Another group believes arms control negotiations are a waste of effort anyway: Arms control and disarmament negotiations have usually been tactical and short lived. They rely for enforcement on goodwill and last only as long as they serve the national interest.³⁶

Unilateral Action

Unilateral action is usually an intermediate option between market arms control and arms control negotiations/treaties. In the arms control context, a nation selects and executes an action without demanding or waiting for reciprocal action by an adversary. The unilateral action may be either announced or unannounced depending upon the reasoning and desired effect. The United States recently pursued this course with the unannounced, but unclassified, unilateral retirement of three sea-based tactical nuclear weapons systems (ASROC, SUBROC, and Terrier BT).

A unilateral action has the benefits of market arms control: swift action, high reversibility, and aimed directly at your needs. Additionally the implementing nation stands to gain politically in some circumstances. We saw this in action with Moscow's 1989 declaration and subsequent unilateral initial withdrawal of troops from Eastern Europe prior to a completed treaty.

There is risk with unilateral action, but it can be minimized with a sound policy matched to the geopolitical and military situation.

Selected Negotiation

Selected negotiation, instead of full negotiation, because the United States would never consider many Soviet proposals. There are some, however, that are reasonable, and if you aren't overly concerned about the slippery slope, some appear to provide the United States an advantage. With little modern naval arms control precedent and an eager Soviet Union, the United States has great flexibility. Not only is there choice among negotiation items, the forum for the negotiations is wide open. The United States could avoid the appearance of naval parity with multilateral discussions but still have strong influence by insisting on limiting participants to countries with major maritime interests and forces (who are mostly Western allies).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The only thing harder than getting a new idea into the military mind is to get an old one out.

B. H. Liddel Hart, Thoughts on War, 1944

The indicators are very strong that naval arms control is coming to the United States--the biggest questions are what and when. The concerns of the U.S. Navy are justifiable and well stated but are in danger of being lost in the swift current of public opinion. It is time for the Navy to change course and steer the nation's naval arms control discussions on an acceptable track. Delay in execution could make reaching station impossible. Following are some suggestions.

Limits on Deployments and Areas of Operations.

This is the one area not to even discuss. For all the reasons already mentioned and lots more, the United States has nothing to gain. Negotiations in other areas should reduce the pressure for area-type restrictions.

Confidence and Security Building Measures

Many CSBMs are already in place and active: the United States should acknowledge them as participation in naval arms control. Agreement on increasing CSBMs should be achievable. Improved communications should develop improved mutual understanding and reduce mistrust. Admiral Trost speaks well of his October 1989 trip to the Soviet Union and agreed with Fleet Admiral Chernavin, at his final call, that such visits were worthwhile and should be continued.³⁷ More ship visit exchanges are in the United States' interest. Exchanging information on naval forces, construction, and doctrine should be very easy--most U.S. Navy information is already available in open sources.

Avoid restrictions on naval exercises. Like area restrictions, the United States can only lose. The Soviet's only legitimate national concern with exercises is as a covering operation for attack. They must already recognize the folly of the United States initiating an attack on them with only maritime forces.

Limiting Platforms and Weapon Systems

Although a high profile item, negotiating limits on platforms isn't wise or practical. The reasons already given tell the story. Negotiations on platform levels could provide career employment for hundreds of people and never reach a solution. The asymmetries in requirements, the changing technology, and the highly questionable utility of an agreement, all argue against this area.

There are other interesting possibilities in this category that could divert the action from platforms. Declare a unilateral removal from sea to shore depot of all sea-based nuclear weapons, except submarine launched ballistic missiles, based on the improved world threat climate and the recent democratic actions of the Soviet Union. Do not negotiate on conventional sea-launched cruise missiles. What does the United States gain by this bold approach?

- ▷ A major political victory on the order of Gorbachev's announced unilateral withdrawal from Eastern Europe.

- ▷ A world opinion lever that can be used against the Soviets during political conflicts, i.e., "If the Soviets persist, the United States will feel compelled to redeploy sea-based nuclear weapons to ensure alliance security."
- ▷ Allows for a wait and see period, so often discussed, while still taking an arms control measure.
- ▷ Maintains the option of reversibility without unilaterally canceling a treaty.
- ▷ More magazine room for conventional ordnance including precision smart munitions.
- ▷ Avoids the growing controversy with "neither confirm nor deny" without identify specific ships or scraping the policy--thereby reducing pressure on some allies.
- ▷ Avoids discussions on "nuclear free zones" as not required.
- ▷ Reduce tension by reducing the platforms capable of conducting a nuclear attack on the Soviet Union. This reduces the need and pressure for other forms of naval arms control.

What does the United States give up with this unilateral removal--not much really?

- ▷ With the retirement of nuclear ASROC, SUBROC, and Terrier BT, the only sea-based U.S. defensive nuclear weapons are air-launched ASW depth charges. They might be useful against a select small number of Soviet submarines, but the expectation of use combined with the utility isn't enough to justify scuttling the removal of nuclear weapons from sea.
- ▷ Offensively the United States has aircraft-dropped nuclear gravity bombs on aircraft carriers and nuclear sea-launched land-attack cruise missiles on attack submarines and surface ships. We would lose a part of NATO's flexible response. We may, as previously stated, shift more threat back to the aircraft carriers--but maybe not so much. With the retention of conventional SLCMs, significant and important firepower still remains with other fleet units.

- ▷ We lose some power projection capability, but could we have used it in a significant way?
- ▷ Essentially, we may have reduced nuclear power projection; however, we reduced conventional power projection and fleet defense little, if any.

Consider the scenarios for use of sea-based nuclear weapons.

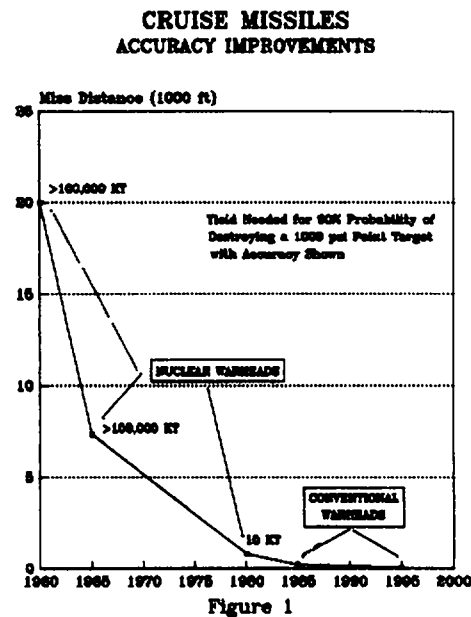
United States First Use. The Soviets don't use large surface formations--the most obvious target for war-at-sea tactical nuclear weapons. The United States doesn't have practical tactical nuclear weapons for war-at-sea. It's very doubtful the U.S. would initiate nuclear warfare just to use the ASW depth charge.

Although the carrier and nuclear SLCMs pack a punch, they are relatively insignificant compared to ICBMs and SLBMs. With coordination and range limitations, their primary uses are in limited nuclear war as part of the flexible response or as part of the same strategic reserve. However, many writings indicate the Soviets don't believe nuclear warfare can remain limited and would very quickly escalate to full scale nuclear warfare. Is the United States willing to take that risk?

Are there other options that can accomplish many of the goals of flexible response? Great improvements in guidance accuracy of cruise missiles, shown in Figure 1,³⁸ indicates conventional cruise missiles can increasingly take over flexible response missions if backed by the strategic nuclear umbrella.

Soviet First Use. The Soviets have the weapons and the Americans have the targets, but would the Soviets strike first with nuclear weapons at sea? It's doubtful the army dominated military structure would agree to Soviet first use at sea under any conditions. The Soviets would either risk U.S. nuclear land retaliation leading to further escalation if they were attempting limited nuclear warfare, or tipping their hand if they planned full scale nuclear warfare. Neither result would be

appealing to a staff concentrating on defense of the motherland. If they don't believe in limited nuclear war, then use at sea would be part of full scale nuclear war. In that case, most would say the naval results are of significant less concern in this apocalyptic context.



If the Soviets eventually reciprocated in the nuclear withdrawal as they already proposed, the advantage would clearly be the United States' with more sophisticated defensive systems and more accurate conventional SLCMs.

Summary. United States first use of tactical nuclear weapons at sea provides little, if any, advantage, and would probably result in full scale nuclear war. Soviet nuclear first use at sea is only practical as part of full scale nuclear war. In both cases the sea battle results are secondary to the continental nuclear war.

Even if the Soviets accepted limited nuclear war at sea, the United States only possible nuclear response would be against land in a highly escalatory attack.

Despite the scenario, there is little practical use for the tactical nuclear weapons the United States has at sea today and much to gain from unilaterally moving them ashore.

CONCLUSION

Barring a drastic reversal in the Soviet Union, the United States must expect to be drawn to the naval arms control altar. Since it appears very likely there will be a naval arms control shotgun

wedding, the U.S. Navy should decide to help pick the bride.

It is the greatest possible mistake to mix up disarmament with peace. When you have peace you will have disarmament.

Winston Churchill: To the House of Commons, 13 July 1934

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