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THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE
STRATEGIC STUDIES REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: The Case For A Second-class Navy: Military Reform And Reagan's Maritime Strategy

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Remarks concerning the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy, criticism of the Maritime Strategy by military reformers, and proposal of an Alternative Strategy that encompasses most of reformer's ideas. The two strategies are examined and some strategic paradoxes are suggested. Concluding remarks suggest some prescriptive measures which can be taken to solve the problems highlighted, but not solved, by the reformers.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A consensus has been reached by many military reformers that the Reagan administration's Maritime Strategy of threatening to strike the Soviet Union in response to an attack is not strategically sound, especially when those counterattacks would be conducted by Navy carriers. The Alternative Strategy, advocated by most of the reformers, calls for the Navy to confine itself to "sea control" missions. They would either eliminate the carrier power projection mission or greatly proscribe it.

Neither the Maritime Strategy nor the reformers' Alternative Strategy offer completely satisfying rationales for the use of the Navy. The Maritime Strategy, as declaratory policy, reinforces deterrence and supports NATO's forward defense doctrine, extending the concept from the central front to the northern and southern flanks. In a prolonged conventional war, the Maritime Strategy offers the best rationale for using the present and planned fleet structure. Nevertheless, as a warfighting doctrine, it is too rigid. In a short conventional war or one that escalates to nuclear war, the Maritime Strategy ranges from an irrelevancy to a recipe for disaster. Options need to be developed for these "worst case" scenarios. An early Tomahawk offensive conducted by SSNs against naval bases and airfields coupled with keeping the carrier battle groups in reserve, at least initially, offers one solution. During the Navy's attempt to gain the initiative and destroy the Soviet Navy in the initial period of a conflict there should be some indication of how the land war is going and perhaps an opportunity for the beginnings of political overtures. The carriers, by not going in harm's way until the time is right--both militarily and politically--could represent important bargaining chips in war termination negotiations.

In this regard, the reformers' sea control navy offers little leverage. Giving up the Navy's power projection capability, as represented by the big-deck carrier, and threatened by the Maritime Strategy, makes little sense. The flexibility and power of a carrier battle group are rightly feared by Soviet planners. Nevertheless, to match this flexibility in the strategic arena and to fully exploit the deterrent value of the U.S. Navy, a broader range of strategic options is required.

The Case For A Second-class Navy:
Military Reform And Reagan's Maritime Strategy

One of the great frustrations of the "military reform movement" is their failure to influence the U.S. Navy. While the reformers can claim, with some justification, to have moved Army thinking toward maneuver warfare, they have yet to have any success in changing the Navy approach to the conduct of war at sea. In recent years the reformers criticism has focused on the Reagan administration's plan for employing the Navy in a conventional war with the Soviet Union. This administration has called not only for increases in the size of the Navy--the "600 ship navy"--but also foresees a more aggressive role for these forces under the Maritime Strategy.(1)

MARITIME STRATEGY: THE BEST DEFENSE IS A GOOD OFFENSE

What is this plan? Made public via posture statements and budget testimony early in the Reagan administration, the Maritime Strategy is keyed to national and allied, particularly NATO, strategy. It calls for U.S. and allied forces, including air and ground units, to fight on the land and sea flanks of Europe and Asia in response to Soviet aggression. The battles for these flanks will support the European central front land battle by protecting reinforcement sea lines of communications (SLOCs) as far "forward" as possible. This concept of forward or extended defense means that the sea lanes will be protected by friendly forces placing themselves between the SLOCs and Soviet bases in the Norwegian Sea and the North-West Pacific. The allies would attempt to destroy the attacking forces, pushing the Soviets progressively further back until the Soviet homeland itself could be threatened.

A second function of this strategy is to seize the initiative. This means preventing the Soviets from limiting the conflict geographically--placing them on the defensive worldwide as soon as possible. Threats to Soviet flanks will also tie down Soviet air and ground forces that could otherwise be employed on the central front.

The Maritime Strategy has three phases--a rising tension phase, a defensive phase in which the Soviets attack, and a third phase where the allies counter attack. During Phase I the Maritime Strategy calls for winning the crisis and deterring further escalation as well as preparing for global conflict by increasing readiness and moving forces into forward defensive positions. During this phase, for example, British and Dutch Marines would reinforce Norway.

Phase II begins with a major Soviet attack that expands to global conflict with the U.S. and its allies. The objective of the U.S. Navy and other forces assigned to the Maritime Strategy is to seize the initiative as far forward (i.e. as close to the Soviet Union) as possible. Goals during this stage include destruction of the Soviet navy, protection of friendly shipping and positioning for counteroffensive action.

In Phase III, carrier battle groups (CVBGs) will conduct strikes on Soviet bases, and amphibious assaults may be used to capture choke points such as the Danish straits or to regain lost allied territory. The goal of the Maritime Strategy is war termination on favorable terms with Western seapower providing the strategic difference for the land battle on the central front.

CRITICISMS OF THE MARITIME STRATEGY

All of the critics of the Maritime Strategy agree on one

point--there is a need for change.(2) Out of this imperative comes the first criticism of the Strategy, namely that it is "more of the same"--it does not represent enough of a new strategy. The reformers argue that the growth of Soviet forces in the 1960s and 1970s and the relative decline in the balance of U.S./Soviet naval power to a "grey area where neither side can be said to be ahead"(3) has created a requirement for a new strategy that explicitly recognizes this situation. They claim that the Maritime Strategy is based on an outmoded concept of maritime and nuclear supremacy that the U.S. enjoyed in the aftermath of World War II but has now lost for the foreseeable future. This situation has placed the United States at a watershed--a "historic turning point"(4) one observer called "comparable to that leading to primary reliance on nuclear deterrence in the early 1950s."(5) The reformers assert the new strategy, whatever it is, will have to be the result of choices between competing proposals for fundamental changes in American strategy. The U.S. will not be able to continue the present policy of maintaining large land, sea and air forces.

Growing out of this contention is a related complaint--it will cost too much to build the forces needed to support a strategy based on maritime superiority. This argument takes several forms. One is that the Maritime Strategy's global scope will spread U.S. forces too thin against an enemy who has the advantage of operating on interior lines.(6) The forces needed to effectively carry out the Maritime Strategy will greatly exceed those now planned. One defense analyst, Jeffray Record, claims, "The Reagan Administration's declared military strategy is not militarily defective. It is foolishly ambitious, betraying an unbridgeable abyss between aspirations and resources."(7)

In his article "Maritime Strategy vs Coalition Defense," Robert Komer credits the Reagan administration with a "more vigorous attack on the 'mismatch' problem than any of its last three predecessors"(8) but then argues that major increases in the Navy required under the Maritime Strategy can only come at the expense of the other services and ultimately at the expense of commitments to our allies under our present "coalition" strategy.

Another cost criticism of the Maritime Strategy is that it is an unsustainable policy. This is particularly applicable to a 600 ship navy with 15 CVBGs. Michael McGwire, a noted naval analyst, has written that historically, Congress has not appropriated enough shipbuilding funds to sustain even the 12 carrier level.(9) McGwire notes that past "underinvestment" in maritime forces was possible because the fleet was shrinking as World War II ships were retired.

If the U.S. has truly reached a crossroad and must make hard, either-or choices based on the costs of strategic alternatives, the choice of a maritime strategy will, in the eyes of some critics, result in a weakening of relations with our allies.

Our chief allies would quickly perceive the implications of a maritime strategy, particularly if budget constraints compelled us to write off as unsustainable our land/air commitments to the defense of Western Europe and Persian Gulf oil. Few would welcome a maritime strategy aimed primarily at naval dominance, even if it protected their own trade, if the price were to expose them to defeat at home. Our already restive allies would correctly perceive such a U.S. strategy as at best a form of unilateral U.S. global interventionism and at worst a form of neoisolationism. Pressures for accommodation with the U.S.S.R. would be powerfully enhanced.(10)

Another complaint is that the Maritime Strategy emphasizes carrier battle groups centered around large carriers. The critics argue that these ships are too large, too expensive, too detectable, and, in an era of smart antiship missiles and nuclear weapons, particularly

vulnerable. Because of their expense the U.S. cannot afford very many of these CVBGs and is forced to put "too many eggs in one basket." As a consequence we cannot afford to risk these valuable, irreplaceable assets in wartime, especially against those Soviet "flanks" where they will be opposed by the full weight of Soviet air and subsurface forces. William Lind argues that as a primarily submarine navy, the Red Navy is not vulnerable to CVBGs with their limited numbers of ASW aircraft.(11)

One criticism of the Maritime Strategy that emerged early in the Reagan administration is probably best summarized in Barry Posen's article "Inadvertant Nuclear War? Escalation And NATO's Northern Flank." His thesis is that the Maritime Strategy, by threatening the Kola Peninsula bases and the SSBN bastions in the Barents Sea will provoke a "defense of the homeland" response in which the Soviets "could decide that a nearly certain-to-succeed nuclear strike against those threatening carriers was both lucrative and necessary."(12) Related areas of concern are those other elements of the Maritime Strategy that would prepare the way for the CVBGs such as B-52 and Tomahawk attacks on Russian bases.(13) How would the Soviets know that these strikes were "tactical" and not "strategic"?

Finally, the Maritime Strategy is criticized as a no-win strategy. Jeffrey Record has said that it "encourages the fallacious conclusion that the outcome of the war at sea will be decisive in a global conflict with the Soviet Union."(14) Robert Komer claims that even the complete success of the Maritime Strategy would not seriously hurt a great Eurasian heartland power like the Soviet Union.(15) The decisive battle will be fought on the central front with seapower playing only a supporting role in protecting the reinforcements.

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY: THE BEST DEFENSE IS A GOOD DEFENSE

As has been shown, there are several arguments against the Maritime Strategy, each with a particular slant to its criticism. Remedies also vary among different proponents. Nevertheless, there is enough common ground to draw the outlines of an "Alternative Strategy" that brings together the proposals of many of the reformers.

The central thrust of the Alternative Strategy is to shift away from attempts at "forward" defense and "carrying the fight to the enemy" to a defensive orientation where the Navy concentrates on local sea control in the reinforcement SLOCs. The Navy power projection mission is greatly reduced in scope and "escalatory" attacks on Soviet territory are held back.(16) In terms of the Maritime Strategy, the reformers would never shift from Phase II to Phase III. Horizontal escalation to other theatres is not conducted with the hope that hostilities will remain limited to a single theatre. Some reformers would go even farther and limit reinforcements to the flanks to defensive systems only. Barry Rosen for example, suggests

the movement of heavy naval units, such as carrier task forces, and long range, high-payload, land-based strike aircraft, such as U.S. Marine A-6Es, to the north of Norway could be deferred in order to reduce the Soviet incentive to mount a major attack on Northern Norway.(17)

Role of the CVBG in the Alternative Strategy

The large carriers currently in commission would exchange their attack squadrons for more fighter and ASW aircraft to defend the SLOCs. In the Atlantic theatre they would operate south of the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (G-I-UK) gap. By not going in harm's way the carriers will not provide the Soviets as much incentive to use nuclear weapons and they could also act as a strategic reserve(18) should the war go nuclear. While the carriers could still assume the

power projection role, this mission would increasingly be assigned under the "distributed firepower" doctrine(19) to other ships and submarines with Tomahawk cruise missiles. The big-deck Nimitz CVN, stripped of its offensive punch, would lose much of its raison d'etre under this strategy, so the reformers would cancel further construction of these ships and "distribute" the fleet's aircraft over a greater number of smaller, cheaper carriers. Since the land-attack aircraft would not be needed, a smaller carrier could meet the operational requirements of the Alternative Strategy with fewer aircraft. While some reformers like the British Invincible class VSTOL carrier, a U.S. copy of the new French CVN design represents an appealing compromise that would satisfy most of the small carrier advocates. At just under 40,000 tons, the Charles DeGaulle will have two catapults capable of launching the F/A-18 and E-2C aircraft. Total air group will number about forty planes.

Role of the SSN in the Alternative Strategy

Like the carrier battle groups, the SSN force would be assigned defensive missions. Convoy direct support assignments and barrier patrols would attempt to prevent Soviet submarines from reaching the SLOCs. Because of the danger of escalatory encounters with Soviet SSBNs, U.S. and allied attack submarines would avoid known SSBN bastions. U.S. SSNs would still be equipped with Tomahawks under the "distributed firepower" doctrine, but the loadout would emphasize conventional warhead antiship and land attack missiles.

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY COMPARED

What do we want either strategy to do? For comparison purposes consider the two strategies not only as warfighting plans but also as

declaratory policy. As declaratory policy the first level of analysis for any maritime strategy must be how well it fits with the national strategy. When one considers that the cornerstone of U.S. strategy is deterrence of Soviet aggression through military strength and threat of retaliation, the Alternative Strategy fails its first test. Worse, it weakens deterrence by reducing the Soviet risk factor. It assures them secure flanks during aggression should they decide to concentrate on the central front and, by eliminating the threat of horizontal escalation, gives them the initiative to choose in what theatres fighting will occur. It will allow them to concentrate their land/air forces accordingly. The Alternative Strategy also represents a potential decoupling from nuclear escalation risk by providing for SSBN sanctuaries and a secure homeland.

The Alternative Strategy, as declaratory doctrine, is unlikely to be reassuring to our allies. A navy restricted to local defense of the ELDCs not only represents a break with NATO's forward defense doctrine, but it also implies a willingness not to seriously oppose limited conquests of allied territory on the flanks. Reinforcements to areas other than the European central front(20) would be at risk without U.S. Navy support. It is doubtful, for example, that British, Canadian, and Dutch forces will go to Norway when U.S. carrier battle groups are restricted to operating south of the G-I-UK gap. The forsaking of the power projection mission for sea control is likewise incompatible with any attempt to restore pre-hostility territorial boundaries--another wartime goal.

Reduced to its essence, the sea control/local defense strategy represents a retreat--a "rather restricted future"(21) where the U.S. limits not only its options in opposing aggression but ultimately its

own credibility as an ally. By giving up the carrier power projection mission the U.S. Navy will lose one of its trump cards--a capability developed at great cost and one in which U.S. expertise is not only unequalled but unlikely to be approached for decades. It is a capability the Soviets are trying to develop for themselves. Can we afford to neutralize this force under the Alternative Strategy? Many of our allies would perceive such a move as a return to the post-Vietnam retrenchment where the U.S. was seen as unwilling to take risks for itself or its friends.

As a warfighting strategy, providing the Soviets secure flanks under the Alternative Strategy gives them two options not available under the Maritime Strategy. The first option is to transfer forces from the unengaged flank theatres to the fighting area. The second Soviet option is to reverse the Maritime Strategy and encircle the Allies from the flanks. In Europe this would involve seizing advanced bases in Norway and gaining control of the Baltic and Turkish Straits.

Operating from advanced bases, possibly on captured Allied territory, the Soviets could greatly multiply the effectiveness of their forces, particularly strike aircraft. Writing for the Naval War College Review in 1981, Lieutenant Commander G. L. Underwood, USCG, examined the German capture of Norway during World War II. He found several implications for the Soviet threat to the Atlantic SLOCs.

With Norway in Soviet control, they could protect their operations in the North Sea and Norwegian Sea, increase the range of aircraft and ships so that they could more easily attack NATO SLOCs, restrict the power of the NATO fleet, establish air superiority and protect their Kola Peninsula and Baltic base areas.(22)

For the West, even the war at sea, despite its ostensibly reduced risks under the local defense doctrine, would inevitably have tough going. Soviet forces would find SLOC interruption an easier task. By ceding the flank land and sea areas, U.S. and allied ability to collect

early warning intelligence and use wide-area ASW assets effectively would largely disappear. With respect to ASW, only submarines could continue to operate without major losses. SOSUS stations, P-3s and the civilian-manned towed array (T-AGOS Stallwart class) ships will be totally vulnerable and the towed array frigates and P-3 airfields nearly so. It is hard to imagine any of these units using their capabilities for extended-range ASW without support from carrier battle groups. Even the Soviet surface navy would pose a formidable threat to allied ASW forces if the carriers were withdrawn to local defense positions south of the G-I-UK gap.

Fewer large-deck carriers, as proposed by the reformers, would mean fewer F-14s and E-2s. As a result, air defense of the SLOCs would become more of a cruise missile defense problem than an extended air battle. Even proponents of the Alternative Strategy must admit that two or three AS-4s are a more difficult target than their Backfire launch aircraft. Attacking Soviet forces would be guaranteed a "free ride" until they entered local defense perimeters. The logistics of the attackers would remain unimpaired as would their command and control systems.

An explicit goal of the Alternative Strategy is to avoid giving the Soviets an incentive to use nuclear weapons by operating the CVBGs far from the Soviet homeland. Yet even while operating in the "near" protecting the SLOCs, the CVBGs will remain vulnerable to attack by nuclear weapons. Almost by definition, the SLOCs will be the targets of nuclear-capable submarines and long-range aircraft. The SS-20 theatre ballistic missile has the range to also threaten CVBGs in the Eastern Atlantic, Western Pacific, Mediterranean and Arabian Gulf SLOCs. (23) The question remains if carriers could avoid becoming

targets for nuclear weapons regardless of their location. Even carriers assigned to SLOC protection represent a latent capability for offensive action.

In the absence of hostilities with the Soviet Union, Navy leaders have procured forces not only for conflict with our principal adversary but also for the wide variety of "peacetime" crisis missions that, since World War II, have so frequently resulted in the exercise of American seapower. The Maritime Strategy offers additional uses for those forces that have the most effect in the widest range of employment scenarios--the big-deck carrier and the associated aircraft and escort ships that make up a modern carrier battle group. The advantage of the small carrier lies in the "distributed firepower" concept--the "eggs" are in many "baskets." While this is an intuitively pleasing concept, it fails in practical terms as a substitute for the big-deck carrier. A smaller carrier, to retain multimission effectiveness as the centerpiece of a battle group, could not be too much smaller, and would probably not be procured in the numbers required to make up for the lost offensive capability of canceled Nimitz CVNs.

Most experts have now given up on the small carrier. It does not save enough money to justify a major loss in aircraft numbers, and the Nimitz-class is now a fully developed ship. Any new ship would take years to create and probably be nearly as expensive, and ...the initial urge to a 15-carrier force has already been funded.(24)

It is doubtful that Congress would agree to a significant enlargement of the U.S. carrier force in order to get the smaller carriers favored by the reformers. Admiral Stansfield Turner, one of the small carrier proponents, has pointed out that "a larger number of smaller carriers probably would not present any savings, and might even cost somewhat more because of additional operating costs for manpower,

fuel, etc."(25) Nevertheless, with carriers now being kept in service for nearly half a century, Admiral Turner would keep the large carriers at their present levels and begin what he sees as the inevitable transition to smaller flattops. In the initial stages of this transition period, the smaller carriers would supplement their larger sisters. Over the long run however, it is difficult to see how the carrier land attack/power projection capability could be sustained.

WHAT ABOUT SOVIET STRATEGY?

Both the Maritime Strategy and the reformer's Alternative Strategy concentrate, at least initially, on SLOC protection. Despite the increase in antishipping orientation of the latest Soviet warships,(26) most Soviet experts do not see the SLOC attack mission as very high on the Soviet Navy's priority list. Discussing likely wartime roles for the Soviet Navy, Norman Friedman wrote

Planners considering a war against NATO, in which, at the least, the aim would be the seizure of western Europe probably envisage three very different roles for their navy. The first role would be the elimination of Western nuclear weapons at sea... This would be achieved by anti-carrier operations combined with offensive antisubmarine warfare directed against NATO ballistic missile submarines... A second theme, given the primacy of nuclear weapons in Soviet thinking, would be the protection of their own nuclear weapons. It seems likely that at least at first they would prefer to cover the SSBN holding areas and, incidentally, such coastal areas as Murmansk, rather than to attempt to sink shipping in the North Atlantic. ...Given the seizure of western Europe as a primary aim, the third major role of the fleet would be to assist the army, particularly on its northern flank. ...However, given Soviet concepts of the course of a war, and their expectation of a quick victory in Europe, Soviet planners concerned with the NATO navies probably think chiefly about their ability to threaten the Homeland and the offensive forces ashore by such means as carrier strikes on airfields.(27)

If this is the case, then the Maritime Strategy may play into Soviet hands by sending the carrier battle groups into harm's way at a time when forward defense of the SLOCs has become meaningless to the land war. The question then becomes whether either strategy is planning for the right war. Is a prolonged conventional war in Europe the scenario we should be planning for? General Rogers, the current SACEUR, expects to have to request nuclear release authority "in days--not weeks" in the event of a Soviet attack in the central front.(28)

SOME STRATEGIC PARADOXES

If the Alternative Strategy fails as a convincing declaratory doctrine or warfighting strategy, is there any value to the criticisms of the reformers? What the reformers do is point out pitfalls and vulnerabilities that must be considered when employing either strategy. Comparison of the Maritime and Alternative strategies also suggests three strategic paradoxes.

-Political Paradox: A maritime strategy that is in concert with NATO's forward defense doctrine may cause political friction and ultimately weaken the alliance because of allied sensitivity to attacking Soviet territory and because the forces required for the Maritime Strategy may cost so much that the U.S. won't be able to afford adequate ground forces for the central front.

-Nuclear Paradox: What may be (arguably) the best strategy for employment of naval forces in a conventional war--"forward defense"--may be the worst nuclear strategy and may even contribute to nuclear escalation. The Soviets would probably view the offensive operations contemplated under the Maritime Strategy as preparations for escalation to theatre nuclear war.

-Land War Paradox: While NATO's land forces seek to deter an attack by a declared readiness to escalate to nuclear weapons, the Maritime Strategy plans only for a conventional war. Also, the Maritime Strategy envisions the use of assets that could be used directly in the central front. These include Air Force fighters, bombers and AWACs aircraft(29) and Army and Marine troops. Will the Soviet air/land assets "tied down" on the flanks keep a like number of allied forces occupied?

PRESCRIPTION

How should the questionable aspects of the Maritime Strategy and the strategic paradoxes be resolved? Clearly uncertainty will always be present. We will not be privy to Soviet plans nor can we be certain of how our allies will act in the future. We should therefore avoid becoming committed to a single strategy. In the final analysis, flexibility at the political, strategic and tactical levels is the key to resolving the paradoxes outlined by the reformers. The Navy, as presently structured, has excellent potential to exercise this flexibility.

At the political level, we must pursue efforts to coordinate the Maritime Strategy and NATO nuclear policy. If General Rogers believes it will be necessary to request nuclear release after only a few days of war, then even SLOC protection may be an inappropriate navy mission. The Maritime Strategy, as it presently exists, should be only one option--that of a protracted conventional war in which decision on the central front is dependent upon reinforcement. The Navy should also develop two nuclear options. The first is a follow-on to the current Maritime Strategy that assumes nuclear weapons will be used after some

period of conventional conflict. The second option should assume the early or immediate use of nuclear weapons. All of these options should be part of a Maritime Strategy that is only a part of a national and allied strategy. Even though the other services have important roles in the current Maritime Strategy, there should be Army and Air Force strategies that spell out their expectations of the Navy contribution to their mission.

With regard to the Maritime Strategy at the tactical level, the core of the problem is the shift from the defensive (Phase II) to the counterattack as proposed by Phase III in the Maritime Strategy. If we should carry the fight to the Soviet homeland, how should we do it and, more important, when should we do it? As declaratory policy and in terms of force structure we should retain the option to threaten power projection but we should not view this mission as a goal in itself. There should be preconditions for transitioning to the offensive. Writing for the Armed Forces Journal, Anthony Cordesman notes that

carrier battle groups must meet the following criteria: (a) arrive in time to affect the outcome of a war that may involve as little as 48-72 hours of warning, (b) survive the combined threat of Soviet air power, missiles, and submarines, (c) deliver sufficient conventional air, missile, and gun power to alter the outcome of the Air/Land battle in a way commensurate with their cost and trade-off value, and (d) be able to survive and fight in a theatre nuclear environment.(30)

In the military realm, the status of the war in the central front is crucial. Have nuclear weapons been used? Will SACEUR be soon forced to use them? More important will be the political questions. What is the status, if any, of war termination negotiations? Is a long war now contemplated? Have Soviet intentions become clear?

In addition to the ground battle, the attrition of aircraft, both friendly and Soviet must be a factor. The air wings of four or five

carriers may not be a significant percentage of allied air power at the beginning of a conflict, but after one or two weeks of central front air battles they could well be an important factor. We should seriously consider keeping the carriers as a strategic reserve for conventional as well as nuclear war. On the "flanks," the offensive could well be an "SSN-only" operation.

The Navy is already doing some of the things the reformers want. Firepower is being "distributed" in the form of Tomahawk and Harpoon cruise missiles and this issue is now one of how many and how fast to procure them. With regard to carriers, the Wasp class LHD, funded in FY84, is designed to be convertible between amphibious assault and sea control missions.(31) The Wasp, in her sea control configuration, will embark about forty aircraft, probably AV-8 Harriers and ASW helicopters.(32) The U.S. Navy should cross-deck Royal Navy Sea Harriers, particularly after they have completed their air intercept radar upgrades,(33) to evaluate a similar program for the Marine Harriers. With visual rules of engagement the order of the day for "peacetime" encounters with hostile aircraft, the agile Harrier could perform useful service as a close-in fighter. This could also apply to the Spanish Navy Harriers. Other experiments with smaller carriers seem in order. The Midway could try Secretary Lehman's 2D (attack OR ASW plus fighter)air group(34) with F/A-18s replacing F-4s and A-7s.

In the area of nuclear war at sea, the Navy should consider some form of defense against ballistic missiles. Perhaps the nuclear version of the SM-2, installed aboard AEGIS cruisers, will provide an interim solution. In the long run, some spinoffs from the Strategic Defense Initiative (Star Wars) may contribute answers.

CONCLUSION

A consensus has been reached by many of the military reformers that the Reagan administration's Maritime Strategy of threatening to strike the Soviet Union in response to an attack is not strategically sound, especially when those counterattacks would be conducted by Navy carriers. The Alternative Strategy--which is advocated by most of the reformers--calls for the Navy to confine itself to "sea control" missions centered around local protection of the sea lines of communications. They would either eliminate the carrier power projection mission or greatly proscribe it. The Navy role in a war with the Soviet Union would be to protect reinforcements enroute to the European central front.

Neither the Maritime Strategy nor the reformers' Alternative Strategy offer completely satisfying rationales for the use of the U.S. Navy in a war with the Soviet Union. The Maritime Strategy, as declaratory policy, reinforces deterrence and supports NATO's forward defense doctrine, extending the concept from the central front to the northern and southern flanks. In a prolonged conventional war, the Maritime Strategy offers the best rationale for using the present and planned fleet structure. Nevertheless, as a warfighting doctrine, it is too rigid. This strategy's clarion call for a transition to the counteroffensive--carrying the fight to the enemy--will, even in the best of conventional war circumstances, require an extraordinary sense of military and political timing on the part of the task force commander. Future war games should certainly concentrate on the transition phase of the Maritime Strategy.

In the worst cases--a short conventional war or one that escalates to nuclear war--the Maritime Strategy ranges from an irrelevancy to a

recipe for disaster. Additional strategic options need to be developed for these "worst case" scenarios. To this writer, an early Tomahawk offensive conducted by SSNs against naval bases and airfields coupled with keeping the carrier battle groups in reserve, at least initially, offers one solution for hedging our bet. Since even the Maritime Strategy expects initial reverses once the war begins, some time will be needed during the attempt to gain the initiative and destroy the Soviet Navy during Phase II. During this period there should be some indication of how the land war is going and perhaps an opportunity for the beginnings of political overtures. The carriers, by not going in harm's way until the time is right--both militarily and politically--could represent important bargaining chips in war termination negotiations.

In this regard, the reformer's sea control navy offers little leverage. Giving up the Navy's power projection capability, as represented by the big-deck carrier, and threatened by the Maritime Strategy, makes little sense. The flexibility and power of a carrier battle group are rightly feared(35) by Soviet planners. Nevertheless, to match this flexibility in the strategic arena and to fully exploit the deterrent value of the U.S. Navy, a broader range of strategic options is required.

NOTES

1. John Lehman, "Rebirth of Naval Strategy," Strategic Review, Summer 1981, p. 14.
2. Paul Schratz, "Yearning For Change," Shipmate, November 1984, p. 6
3. George C. Wilson, "U.S. Has Lost Naval Superiority Over Soviets, Leaders Tell Hill Panel," Washington Post, 6 February 1981, p. 10.
4. Stansfield Turner and George Thibault, "Preparing For The Unexpected: The Need For A New Military Strategy," Foreign Affairs, Fall 1982, p. 122.
5. Robert Komer, "Maritime Strategy vs Coalition Defense," Foreign Affairs, Summer 1982, p. 1124.
6. Jeffrey Record, "Jousting With Unreality: Reagan's Military Strategy," International Security, Winter 1983/84, p. 11.
7. Ibid. p. 18.
8. Komer, p. 1128.
9. Michael McGwire, "The Navy And National Security," Unpublished paper, 25 April 1983, p. 3.
10. Komer, p. 1134.
11. William S. Lind, Comment and Discussion on "The Future of U.S. Seapower," by T. B. Hayward, U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, July 1979, p. 23.
12. Barry R. Posen, "Inadvertant Nuclear War? Escalation and NATO's Northern Flank," International Security, Fall 1982, p. 31. Also see Joshua Epstein, "Horizontal Escalation: Some Notes On A Recurrent Theme," International Security, Winter 1983/84 and Captain Linton F. Brooks, USN, "Escalation and Naval Strategy," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, August 1984.
13. Lieutenant Paul G. Johnson, USN, "Tomahawk: The Implications Of A Strategic/Tactical Mix," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, April 1982.
14. Record, p. 13.
15. Komer, p. 1133.
16. Posen, pps. 51-53. Posen suggests that all war plans, force structure and declaratory policy be reviewed for their "escalatory potential" by a specially constituted group of civilian and military officials.
17. Posen, p. 53.

18. The idea of the aircraft carrier as a strategic reserve was probably best argued by Captain Linton Brooks in his article "Escalation and Naval Strategy," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, August 1984, pps. 33-37. An earlier proponent of this idea was Commander Robert C. Powers, USN, in Comment and Discussion, "The Potential Battle of the Atlantic," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, December 1979, p. 30 and his article "Escalation Control," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, January 1980, p. 55.

19. Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, USN, "Naval Battles We Could Lose," International Security Review, Summer 1981, p. 146.

20. See "NATO's Sinking Feeling," The Economist, 6 June 1981, p. 51 for an overview of the Royal Navy role in protecting reinforcements.

21. Michael Vlahos, "A Crack In The Shield: The Capital Ship Concept Under Attack," The Journal of Strategic Studies, May 1979, p. 74. Vlahos discusses the capital ship (i.e. the big-deck carrier) as a symbol of American commitment to it's allies.

22. Lieutenant Commander G. L. Underwood, USCG, "Soviet Threat To The Atlantic Sea Lines Of Communication: Lessons Learned From The German Capture Of Norway In 1940," Naval War College Review, May-June 1981, p. 47.

23. U.S. Department of Defense, Soviet Military Power, April 1984, p. 52.

24. Anthony H. Cordesman, "The 600-Ship Navy: What Is It? Do We Need It? Can We Get It?," Armed Forces Journal, April 1984, p. 70.

25. Turner, p. 134.

26. Norman Friedman, "The Soviet Fleet in Transition," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Naval Review 1983, p. 162.

27. Ibid., p. 161.

28. On the thirty-fifth anniversary of NATO, General Rogers stated that in the event of a Soviet attack he would have to request nuclear release "in a matter of days--not weeks." Interview with SACEUR on Armed Forces Network (Europe) News, 4 April 1984.

29. Lieutenant Commander Fredrick J. Glaeser, USN, E-3A (AWACS): An Untapped Maritime Support Resource," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, August 1979, pps. 106-110.

30. Cordesman, p. 70.

31. Department of the Navy, Ships, Aircraft And Weapons Of The United States Navy, August 1984, p. 14.

32. Commander G. Pat Tierney, USN and Colonel Myrl W. Allinder, USMC, "AV-8B/LAMPS MK-III LHD-Class ships," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, November 1984, pps. 140-145.

33. See Flight International, 30 July 1983, p. 230 and 8 December 1984, p. 1545 for details of the Sea Harrier program. British plans include retrofitting a Ferranti pulse-doppler radar with look down-shoot down capability, AMRAAM air-to-air missiles, Sea Eagle antiship missiles, relocating the Sidewinder launch position to the Harrier wingtip, and fitting larger drop tanks.

34. John Lehman, Aircraft Carriers: The Real Choices (Beverly Hills: Sage) p. 61.

35. Engineer-Captain 2nd Rank V. Yeliseyev, "Strategic Forces Reserve," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 8, 1973, p. 85.

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