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In My View

Ernest Blazar

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IN MY VIEW...

The Second American Century

Sir:

I read with great interest Edward Rhodes's essay, "...From the Sea' and Back Again: Naval Power in the Second American Century" (Spring 1999, pp. 13–54).

His central point that the Navy accommodated itself to this nation's post-Cold War political leadership in the early to mid-1990s by swapping a Mahanian sea-control strategy for power projection inland is correct and well documented.

Less well articulated in the essay is a compelling case for reversing the Navy's littoral mission, as Rhodes proposes. How the Navy and nation would be well served by disentangling our naval forces from national security matters ashore is simply left unsaid.

As U.S. access to overseas bases is shut or made conditional, the Navy's ability to project power without restriction is needed today. That explains, in part, the frequency of recent Tomahawk use and the need for the F/A-18E/F's extra range.

Patrolling the high seas and safeguarding lines of commerce while the post-Cold War world redefines itself in places like Serbia, Bosnia, and elsewhere does not seem like making best use of the Navy.

Potent threats will undoubtedly be confronted again on the high seas. The dexterity with which the Navy focused itself ashore in the 1990s will likewise ease its return to the blue water when necessary. The equipment that Navy men and women are receiving today, like aircraft carriers and the *Virginia*-class

submarines, are equally useful across the entire spectrum of missions the Navy may undertake.

Ernest Blazar
Senior Fellow, Lexington Institute
Arlington, Virginia

The Peacekeeping Challenge

Sir:

I recently reread Dr. Hubert Huser's article on the Argentine military in peacekeeping operations in the Summer 1998 *Review*. The portion of the article that interested me was Dr. Huser's statement, "Substantial participation of Argentina in peacekeeping and such naval exercises as UNITAS positions that nation as a significant player in [Western] hemispheric security, in collaboration with the United States and its neighbors." His statement is true and needs to be used as model to establish regional security in other parts of the globe, under the auspices of the United Nations. Today's professional soldier and sailor will participate in more operations involving nation building, election monitoring, and peacekeeping. I have served in two amphibious squadrons in 1996 and 1998, participating in operations in West Africa, Bosnia (IFOR and SFOR), and the Persian Gulf. When not carrying out a mission our group was tasked to conduct joint exercises with Nato and non-Nato allies in the Mediterranean.

The challenge now is to equip our military leaders with the education, confidence, and tools needed to carry out peacekeeping missions abroad. In creating a cadre of senior leaders at the task force commander level who are given opportunities to learn from their counterparts in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, peacekeeping should be the goal. Nations like Egypt, Kenya, and Nigeria all have courses in peacekeeping at their respective war colleges. A frequent exchange of students ought to take place between the United States and these nations, developing their skills at interacting with allied forces. Although real-world operational experience is invaluable, time is lost trying to comprehend each nation's command structure. Educating senior leaders prior to a contingency will allow them to give better direction to their own forces and enable the efficient exchange of operational planning in a peacekeeping environment.

Egypt has participated in twelve peacekeeping missions since 1963. In 1995, the Egyptians established the Cairo Center for Training and Conflict Resolution in Africa (CCPA). The organization was established as a result of the 1993 conference of African heads of state. One of the goals of this conference was establishing a mechanism for conflict management and resolution, one that is inherently African. CCPA's curriculum trains senior African officers and civilians in civil affairs, election monitoring, and observation activities. Courses are

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taught in both French and English, and they provide Egypt with a pool of officers who are experts in African peacekeeping. Exchanging American and Egyptian officers provides exposure to African methods of dealing with peacekeeping crisis and allows for the interaction of senior officers for future assignment together.

Nigeria has conducted twenty-five peacekeeping missions since 1960. As in Egypt, the Nigerian National War College has established a Center for Peace Research and Conflict Resolution (CPRCR), in 1996. CPRCR trains officers at all levels from sublieutenant to general in both the line and staff communities, and it has trained officers from other African nations and Korea. An excellent opportunity exists for exchange of students with Nigeria. Finally, Kenya uses its experience from seventeen peacekeeping missions since 1979 to develop its own course in peacekeeping, at the Kibiku training area, northwest of Nairobi. The face of conflict is changing and requires a new breed of warrior/diplomat who is tactical yet capable of interacting with foreign forces in an effort to bring stability to a festering trouble spot plagued by tribalism, resource disputes, and ethnic hatreds. Dr. Huser illustrates Argentina's policy of being a contributor to regional stability; as illustrated by the three African examples, many nations share this desire.

Lt. Youssef H. Aboul-Enein, MSC, USN
Naval Hospital
Great Lakes, Illinois

Information about the peacekeeping courses taught in several dozen nations can be found on the Internet at <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/training>.