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Henry C. Bartlett

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A t the highest level, a nation's grand strategy influences its choice of naval forces. So, in turn, do military and maritime strategies. Each supports the higher order strategy while providing further insight into specific forces required.[1]

Strategies, however, guide naval force planners only so far. Where should they go to gain more insight into future requirements? We suggest that the next step is to study three general planning cases. Examining a meaningful set of starkly different situations in which naval forces have been used should stimulate deeper thinking about the appropriate level and mix of naval forces to support national policy. Since force planning is usually constrained financially, this effort should result in a sense of priority. Some forces will always be more important than others; the difficulty lies in deciding.

Cases Defined

War at Sea. In peace, the purpose of naval forces is to apply strategic leverage against a rival seapower to deter war. Should peace collapse, the purpose is to help end the ensuing war favorably, specifically by ensuring the passage

Professors Bartlett and Holman are members of the Naval War College faculty. They teach force planning in the National Security Decision Making (NSDM) Department.

As an Air Force officer, Professor Bartlett last served as Vice Commander of the 474th TAC Fighter Wing, Nellis AFB. Earning his doctorate in business administration from Indiana University, he specializes in the fields of force planning, defense economics, organizational behavior, and accounting.

Professor Holman is a career intelligence officer. Holding a doctorate in Russian history from Georgetown University, he teaches force planning, economics, organizational psychology, and a variety of courses dealing with the Soviet Armed Forces.

of friendly shipping and denying transit to the enemy's shipping. Generally, this is done by destroying or blockading the enemy's fleet. This case focuses on the Soviet Navy today.

War against the Land. Under this case, naval forces apply strategic leverage directly or indirectly against the territory of a major land power. The goal is to assist joint and combined forces in deterring war or ending it on favorable terms. In recent years, this case has applied to Soviet-controlled territory in Eurasia.

War in the Third World. Here, strategic leverage is applied by naval forces to control developing crises, to deter war, or, again, to resolve conflict on favorable terms. This third case applies to all situations not covered by the first two. Although concerned primarily with non-Soviet contingencies, limited conflict against Soviet forces under highly constrained regional circumstances is possible. Such a conflict would likely occur well beyond the borders of both superpowers, jeopardizing the vital interests of neither.

War at Sea

From 1945 through the mid-1970s, naval planners had little need to think seriously about war at sea. We rarely noticed our major rival in foreign ports or on the high seas. Furthermore, Soviet fleets were hampered by geography. Their basing areas in the Barents Sea, Baltic Sea, Sea of Japan, Black Sea, and Sea of Okhotsk were widely separated and vulnerable to piecemeal destruction. Except for the Barents, they were also restricted by narrow, foreign-controlled exits, ice (during parts of the year), or both.

During these years, U.S. naval warfare concerns were confined to war in the Third World. Korea and Vietnam were limited wars from our perspective; both were long and difficult. However, neither required combat against a formidable navy or the landmass of a major power such as China or the Soviet Union. The U.S. maritime forces of choice were carrier-based aviation and combined arms marine forces ashore. Only once, at Inchon in Korea, were marines used in an important amphibious assault. Coastal and riverine forces found employment, but again, only once, this time in Vietnam. In both cases, strategic sealift was safe from attack.

Western naval planners began to think seriously about the Soviet Navy in the mid-1970s. A series of articles by its commander, Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union Sergei Gorshkov, trumpeted the rise of Soviet naval power as proof that Moscow had become a superpower equal to the United States. Western studies obligingly concluded that the Russian bear had learned to swim.[2]

A massive buildup of Soviet air, ground, and naval forces—coming hard on the heels of the fall of Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, Angola and Ethiopia—exacerbated growing U.S. concerns. More than ever before, Western planners saw serious reasons to worry about the survivability of Nato. The central front in Germany and the protection of tankers bringing oil from the Middle East were of particular concern. In the event of war, Soviet naval forces might be used to sink those tankers and provide support from the seas to advancing Warsaw Pact armies.

This assessment of Western weakness and Soviet strength was reinforced by the unexpected Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. More than at any time since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, we had reason to worry about Soviet expansionism throughout the Eurasian landmass and perhaps beyond. Furthermore, belief grew that Soviet maritime capabilities posed a threat to the U.S. Navy's ability to operate unimpeded throughout the world.

It was against this background that naval thinkers developed the "Maritime Strategy" in the 1980s. Instantly and harshly condemned by the Soviets, it marked a renaissance of aggressive spirit and doctrinal innovation for the U.S. Navy. Some of the "Maritime Strategy's" key concepts apply to all potential naval actions. Under any crisis circumstance, U.S. naval forces would be expected to deploy early and move well forward. But which enemy would they fight, and where? Primarily against the Soviets at sea, against the Soviet-controlled landmass of Eurasia, or in the Third World? These are perhaps the most important questions one could ask about the future of the U.S. Navy.

The war at sea offers important opportunities for strategic leverage. A core concept has been the "threat of a long war." Western purposes would be to control, contain and destroy the enemy fleet; deny the enemy access to the sea so that he can neither reinforce his forward units nor resupply his industrial base; and bolster our own economy with the resources of the world. Thus the West could hope to continue the war at times and places of its own choosing and present the adversary with the prospect of a protracted and unwinnable war. Such a prospect, of course, would not be entirely pleasant for the West, whose potential for mobilization has been generally atrophying over the past several decades. Even so, the lessons of the Napoleonic wars, World War I, and World War II all suggest that the Western maritime coalition would have long-term advantages over its rivals, once enemy naval forces were neutralized.

The war at sea might require attacks against a wide range of sea, air, land, and space objectives. The key distinction here is that these attacks *directly* harm the adversary's maritime capability. For example, strikes against naval facilities on the Kola Peninsula would support the war at sea. (On the other hand, attacks intended to divert Soviet air and land forces

from some threatened Allied position ashore would be part of the war against the land.)

A second and more controversial concept deals with "attrition of Soviet SSBN Forces." The purpose would be to put pressure on Moscow's strategic nuclear reserves, thus influencing the overall correlation of nuclear forces in the West's favor. Advocates contend that such a campaign would moderate Soviet behavior and increase the chances for negotiation, bargaining, and war termination on favorable terms. But exactly the opposite—and no less hypothetical—argument has also been made by those who contend that the anti-SSBN campaign is escalatory, destabilizing, and unwise.

Whichever view one holds, destruction of Soviet ballistic missile submarines is considered a part of the war at sea. However, as an integral part of the Soviet long-range nuclear force—which is predominantly located ashore—these boats are also tied to the war against the land. Their role in the overall correlation of nuclear forces thus puts them in a special category, which reflects an underlying tension among the cases.

Campaigns for executing the war at sea will have a strong bearing on the choice of forces to be bought, trained, and maintained. As a general rule, the maritime strategy encourages early, forward and offensive actions against enemy forces. But how early, how far forward, and how offensive? The answers to these questions will depend upon the type of campaigns envisaged and will thus exert a direct influence upon the technological sophistication and number of weapon systems required to implement them.

For example, would highly aggressive campaigns to destroy Soviet naval forces in their bastions (Barents Sea and Sea of Okhotsk) require larger numbers of our most sophisticated systems? If so, then possible force emphases might be on multicarrier battle forces, Aegis cruisers and destroyers, submarine-launched land-attack conventional missiles, and forward deployments of maritime patrol aircraft.

What about moderately aggressive campaigns, perhaps aiming to contain Soviet combatants within their bastions, as opposed to sinking them? Blockading Soviet bastions, instead of penetrating them, might favor greater numbers of attack submarines, but fewer carriers, and less reliance upon the Aegis screening ships (because of greater distance of carrier battle groups from Soviet land-based aircraft).

Would other, essentially defensive approaches (such as choke-point barriers), satisfy Western needs? If so, should the force planner consider radically different levels and mixes of forces, possibly emphasizing remote sensors and mines more than the previous two campaign options?

Having considered these related questions of strategy, campaign planning, and force structure, are there other important factors affecting the war at sea? Technology might be such an influence. Should surface ship design move toward less observable hulls? Do emerging options for propulsion, weapons,

sensors, and satellite communication indicate radical departures in force planning? Or does the Gorbachev era drive our threat perception away from the war at sea entirely?

War against the Land

From the 1950s through the 1970s, American naval planners thought of the war against the land in terms of nuclear platforms deployed around the Eurasian continent to help contain and deter the Soviet Union. The forces of choice were submarines armed with long-range ballistic missiles and attack aircraft operating from forward-deployed aircraft carriers.

Such thinking changed sharply in the 1980s. Now naval thinkers identify several nonnuclear alternatives in the event of war against the Soviet-controlled landmass. Their common denominator is gaining strategic leverage from the sea to support joint and combined operations on the Eurasian continent. One possibility is to apply "pressure to the flanks" of a combat theater. Such operations might seek to protect friendly populations and territory, divert enemy land and air forces from the main axis of attack, disrupt his strategic time lines, interdict lines of communication and damage his exposed industrial base. A more ambitious goal would be to open up a new front within the theater.

A second alternative involves the concept of "horizontal escalation." The purpose would be to extend the conflict to an entirely new theater of war, thus confronting the Soviets with the dilemmas of conflict in widely dispersed areas. An example would be a campaign in the Pacific following Soviet aggression in Europe. This could take the form of strikes against Soviet forces, lines of communications or the industrial base. A more demanding and risky campaign might involve landing forces and seizing territory on the Kamchatka Peninsula or the Kurile Islands.

"Direct support" of allied air and land forces opposing the main axis of a combined-arms Soviet attack is an even more demanding alternative. Western thinking about such a possibility has tended to focus on Nato, although the same ideas apply to Southwest Asia or the Pacific. For a Nato central front scenario, this could take the form of one or two marine expeditionary forces deployed to such areas as Denmark or Northern Germany to defend otherwise vulnerable territory. Such deployments might be backed up by powerful carrier battle forces, providing air defense and striking power against enemy forces or lines of communication.

"Deep attacks within the Soviet homeland" would be a further alternative, differing in the nature of its target-set and escalatory implications. The targets might include strategic command and control nodes, air defense nets, or critical industrial assets. Such objectives would imply an emphasis on different

types of highly sophisticated forces such as stealthy, sea-launched cruise missiles and long-range attack aircraft.

Our concern for the war against the land during the late 1970s and 1980s created a bias for particular kinds of maritime forces. These included:

● Highly defensible carrier battle forces capable of operating near a Soviet-controlled landmass;

● Deep-strike capabilities against land targets;

● Large numbers of systems to permit decisive concentration of forces, action simultaneously in more than one theater, and the offsetting of losses which would occur in such high-threat environments.

But does the war against the land still deserve the same level of attention that it once received? If so, are the same force emphases still valid? And if not, where should emphasis go?

War in the Third World

Naval forces have been widely used for a long time as a tool of U.S. foreign policy and crisis intervention. But to what extent should this role affect force planning? Is it safe to assume that the forces developed for the war at sea and war against the land are sufficient for lesser contingencies?

There are many lessons to be learned from the Falklands War, the interventions in Grenada and Panama, the peacekeeping operation in Lebanon, the multinational task force in the Persian Gulf, and the raid on Libya. Likewise, any future contingencies should be used to review traditional assumptions and the priority of the Third World case for naval force planning.

Finally, how should force planners look into the future? Is there a need for radically different intervention forces to achieve decisive political results, for example, forces capable of more stealth and speed? If so, to what extent should they be naval forces? How should they be equipped for the growing threat of highly sophisticated technology in the Third World, such as chemicals, toxins, precision-guided munitions, and a bizarre mix of Soviet, Chinese, European, and American weapons?

Analyzing the Cases

Thinking in terms of these cases can materially help force planners. The first step is to consider each case separately, as if it were the only one required of naval forces. Given the threat, what are the dominant tasks and forces? What critical shortfalls exist? Clearly, there will be other tasks and forces, as well as less painful shortfalls, but this array is sufficient to start the analysis.

A matrix, such as the one that follows, can be used to help organize data, identify key problems, and seek opportunities.

Matrix for Naval Force Planning

Case	War at Sea	War against the Land	War in the Third World
Threat	Soviet Navy and supporting arms	Soviet combined land, air, and sea forces	Primarily non-Sov. • Possibly hi-tech • Single theater • Wide range of quality and quantity
Dominant Tasks	Sea denial & Sea control	Power projection & Strategic lift	Crisis control
Dominant Forces	SSN Aegis MPA CVBG	CVBF MEF (Heavy) TLAM (C) SSBN	CVBG MEF (Light)

Critical Shortfalls	Sensors
	• Capabilities
	Weapons
	• Numbers
	Logistics
	  support ships
	ASAT
		Long-range strike assets
		• Attack A/C
		• TLAM (C)
		CVBF defenses
		Logistics
		  support ships
		Amphibious
		  assanlt ships
		Fast sealift
		ASAT
			Military assistance
			Minesweepers
			Brown water forces
			Special forces
			Search and rescue
			Breakbulk sealift

Let us next consider all the cases at once to develop a sense of priority among them. If we judge that one naval planning case ranks higher in priority than the others, this does not mean that it would necessarily absorb all available resources. But it does mean that naval force planners should make key decisions for that case before proceeding to the others.

The third step is to develop an integrated priority list which cuts across the three cases. Each case will logically have its own force planning requirements, ranging from most essential to least essential. The resulting list would not necessarily rank all the highest priority items of one case ahead of the priorities of the other two.

Such a list should be tested thoroughly. This requires reexamining campaign plans within the cases, mission area analyses (such as AAW, ASW, or mine warfare), and lessons learned from recent conflicts.

Our Priorities for the Naval Force Planning Cases

In our view, the war at sea should be number one for the 1990s. We base this judgment on several considerations:

● We cannot adequately reinforce, resupply, open new theaters, trade, or fully mobilize the industrial base without being able to use the seas when and where we choose. Hence, controlling the sea is a necessary condition for our national strategy of forward defense.

● Victory at sea, in a war against a continental power, might not guarantee ultimate victory for the West. However, defeat at sea would deprive our maritime alliance of the substance that bonds its members and provides the enduring flexibility historically essential for ultimate victory.

● The Soviet Navy is a formidable threat to our maritime alliance. Not since the German and Japanese navies of the 1940s have we known such a rival at sea. We doubt that any foreseeable breakthroughs in arms control will change this situation.

● There are many options for employing the Soviet Navy. They range from the conservative bastion concept (which would stress the defense of SSBNs in Soviet waters) to more risky assaults upon Nato's flanks and shipping in combined arms assaults against adjacent land theaters.[3]

We rank war in the Third World second in importance for force planners. In our view, naval forces will remain the instrument of choice for the following reasons:

● Crises in the Third World will continue to arise from shifts in the balance of power, international terrorism, the proliferation of advanced weaponry, and intractable regional rivalries.

● Most of those crises are likely to occur near navigable waters.

● Freedom of the seas will remain a key principle of international relations.

● The growing constraints on our overseas basing structure, overflight rights, and alliance commitments restrict the employment of U.S. ground and ground-based air forces more than ever before.

● Naval forces provide an over-the-horizon, discreet capability to embolden friends, discourage enemies, influence events, and intervene when necessary.

We see more and more reason to question the traditional assumption that preparing for the "worst case" of war with the Soviet Union will leave us well-prepared for combat in the Third World. That assumption may be defensible when we have adequate time on our side to concentrate forces, improvise joint actions, mobilize reserves, and convince allies to join us. However, that assumption is indefensible when fast-breaking events open us to attack by increasingly sophisticated enemies in the Third World—long before we can marshal all the assets theoretically available to us. Therefore,

we suspect there will be a growing demand for specialized forces, capable of fast, stealthy, decisive action against Third World targets.

Finally, we see war against the land as priority three. Real breakthroughs in U.S.-Soviet relations have been occurring, and Moscow appears to be moving toward a more defensive posture. Furthermore, declining U.S. defense budgets will constrain force planners and put a premium on well-reasoned priorities. Under all these circumstances, naval planners may find it wise to think less in terms of hazarding scarce naval assets for campaigns against Soviet-dominated territory and, instead, placing more stress on ensuring superiority at sea and controlling Third World crises.

* * *

The process just outlined should help naval force planners clarify their thinking. We view force planning hierarchically. At the highest national level are the interests, threats, and objectives which set the stage for force planning and provide a general sense of purpose and direction. Strategies—national, military, and maritime—further guide our choice of forces. However, specifying the actual level and mix requires further analysis at lower levels of detail. The next step is to analyze the three naval force planning cases, as shown above. They have received too little attention, in our opinion, as an important link between strategy and campaign planning.

As we look to the future, we sense the importance of building further consensus about the logic chain for naval force planners. The "Maritime Strategy" has served us well, but it is not enough. The complete conceptual framework should include the naval planning cases, campaign analyses within those cases, mission area analysis (AAW, ASW, and ASUW) within the campaigns, and lessons learned from recent crisis and conflict experience. To the extent that Gorbachev has shaken many of our traditional assumptions about the Soviet threat, we would do well to return to the basics of the major naval planning cases.
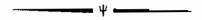
Notes

1. Bartlett, Henry C. and Holman, G. Paul, "Strategy as a Guide to Force Planning," *Naval War College Review*, Autumn 1988, pp. 15-25.

2. The genesis of Gorshkov's proclamations on the importance of a navy seems to be his 1965 article in the restricted General Staff journal, *Voyennaya mysl'*, which he greatly expanded in his book, *Sea Power of the State*, and the series of commentaries, *Navies in War and Peace*. For a Western analysis, see John G. Hibbits, "Admiral Gorshkov's Writings: Twenty Years of Naval Thought," in Paul J. Murphy, ed., *Naval Power in Soviet Policy: Vol. 2, Studies in Communist Affairs*, published under the auspices of the U.S. Air Force (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Gov't. Print. Off., 1978).

3. We should not forget the influence of Soviet Army officers who dominate Moscow's General Staff. Their stress on combined arms operations suggests that naval forces might be used to support deep strike operations if required. Their use of Soviet naval forces might be analogous to their hypothetical air operation, a non-nuclear joint onslaught whose goal is to confound enemy hopes for air supremacy—

even at the cost of massive losses to Soviet air assets—and thus to assure Soviet victory on the ground. For a thoughtful analysis of the mentality of the Soviet General Staff, see Christopher Donnelly, *Red Banner: The Soviet Military System in Peace and War* (Alexandria, Va.: Jane's Publishing Inc., 1988), pp. 140-141.

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Fourteenth Military History Symposium

The Department of History (United States Air Force Academy) will sponsor the Fourteenth Military History Symposium, 17-19 October 1990 on "Vietnam, 1964-1973: An American Dilemma." The symposium will examine the disparate nature of America's combat involvement in Vietnam, focusing on the "dilemmas" caused by U.S. participation in the war during the Johnson and Nixon presidencies. The symposium will begin with an assessment of the war's scholarship on the afternoon of 17 October. That evening, the Thirty-third Harmon Memorial Lecture will probe the ambiguities of American involvement. On the second day, the morning session will examine the war during the Johnson era; the afternoon session will analyze Vietnamese perspectives of the conflict. On the evening of 18 October, a formal banquet will assess cinematic and literary views of the war. The final day's sessions will evaluate the war during the Nixon administration, and the symposium will conclude with a panel discussion of Vietnam's impact on the United States. For more information concerning the symposium, contact: Captain Scott Elder, Department of History, U.S. Air Force Academy, CO 80840-5701, telephone: 719-472-3232.