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In My View

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IN MY VIEW . . .

**For Naval Arms Control: Mix Apples with Oranges**

Sir,

In his article “‘Just Say No!’ The U.S. Navy and Arms Control: A Misguided Policy?” (Winter 1990), Mr. Adam Siegel complains that “the uniformed navy has not played a leading role in the [naval arms control] debate.” While I, for one, promise to continue attempts to remedy Mr. Siegel’s complaint (see my article in the Winter 1989 *Review*), the reason for such a state of affairs is simple: previous proposals, such as declared submarine sanctuaries, bans on ASW platforms, and “zones of peace,” are unverifiable, unenforceable or strategically disadvantageous to the United States. At best, they are “symbolic”; at worst, they represent cynical propaganda. Unfortunately, most new proposals—even Mr. Siegel’s—contain similar flaws.

As Commander McKenzie points out in the adjacent article, the problem lies in the geographic and political asymmetries between the United States and the Soviet Union. From a strategic perspective, reductions in U.S. naval capability should be matched by corresponding cuts in Soviet land and strategic missile forces, not the Soviet navy. Mr. Siegel errs—in similar fashion to proponents of naval arms control in the 1920s—by assuming that naval arms control, or disarmament (the distinction gets a bit thin when dealing with most proposals), can be conducted in isolation from the other factors that comprise the geopolitical relationship between the two superpowers.

The facts of geography are clear: the United States is inherently dependent on naval forces for self-defense and the defense of its allies; the Soviet Union is inherently dependent on land forces for self-defense. While American naval forces may be capable of interdicting Soviet ocean-borne trade and destroying Soviet naval bases and seaports, these forces are unable to threaten the internal integrity of the Soviet

Union. However, Soviet land forces appear quite capable of threatening the internal integrity of America's European and Asian allies. Quite simply, the Soviets do not need a navy to launch an offensive war. Given these facts, trading U.S. naval forces for Soviet naval forces does nothing to achieve the theoretical aim of arms control: reduction of the potential for a surprise offensive attack.

This is not to say that naval "arms control" should not be attempted. Mr. Siegel has an excellent point: if the Navy is unable to develop proposals attuned to the perception of a "peace dividend" resulting from perestroika, it is likely that Congress will. Such proposals may not be in keeping with current naval strategies and may cause an imbalance in our force mix. Since a significant portion of the American public believes that formal arms control agreements are the harbinger of peaceful relations, it may be in the Navy's institutional interest to propose arms control-like measures. There is no reason that the Navy should not try for arms reduction agreements for those forces threatened by budget cuts. Currently, the Soviets are reaping some propaganda benefit from highlighting the scrapping of obsolete ships. But all that is public relations, not arms control. A real arms control swap would be U.S. sea-launched cruise missiles for Soviet tank, artillery and infantry divisions and hardened command and control centers.

If arms control is to be effective in enhancing the security of the United States it must incorporate American strategy, not simply trade off similar forces. Mutual agreements may actually result in unilateral restraints. In discussing the possibility of a mutual American-Soviet attack submarine build-down, Mr. Siegel makes a critical error by lumping nuclear and conventionally-powered attack submarines together and assuming that both present an equivalent threat to SSBNs. This notion is wrong. Conventionally-powered subs pose a limited threat to SSBNs—or to other naval combatants—in open ocean areas because they are unable to remain covert. With limited high-speed endurance and the need to snorkel to recharge battery power, conventionally-powered subs are submersible ships, not true submarines. The effectiveness of quiet diesel-electric subs in blocking choke points and coastal areas is undeniable; however, neither of these missions falls within current American naval strategy. Therefore, there is little rationale for the U.S. Navy to procure such vessels, nor is there any rationale for trading American nuclear attack subs for Soviet conventional subs.

To summarize, the flaw in naval arms control is that most proponents view it as just that: *naval* arms control. Geography dictates its ineffectiveness: its 1920s version did not prevent Japan from invading mainland Asia or Germany mainland Europe. Unfortunately, we've been taught never to mix apples and oranges. Naval arms controllers want to trade apples for apples or oranges for oranges without realizing that the value of such deals differ based on whether concluded in Florida or Washington state.

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Maritime Forces "Will Not Operate Alone"

Sir,

Henry C. Bartlett and G. Paul Holman's "Naval Force Planning Cases" (Spring 1990) is a welcome attempt to bring rigor to the formulation of strategic policy as we move into the next century. Their touristic approach to naval strategy and force planning is both comprehensive and highly informative—particularly to students of defense policy who lack specific knowledge of naval forces.

Although their article is impressive and important, I am struck by the degree to which the interconnectedness of modern warfare is downplayed or ignored. One sees this in the literature of all services, but more so in the journals of the sea services and the writings of naval and marine officers—presumably because of the relative independence of maritime forces, with their self-contained land, sea and air components. I find it difficult to envision late twentieth century warfare with a major opponent as anything less than a multi-service, multi-national effort with inseparably linked air, sea, land and space dimensions. In a given dimension—the "campaign at sea," for instance—maritime forces will clearly predominate. But they will not operate alone, even well out to sea. Ground forces will still be required to seize or defend important airfields, ports and coastal areas. Air forces will conduct strikes against shore targets and even forces at sea which are relevant to the naval campaign. Reconnaissance, both satellite and tactical, will be important to the sea battle. These and many other contributions will be made by sister services and allied forces as well as maritime forces.

In other dimensions, maritime forces will serve in secondary roles. Marine forces, for example, routinely operate in conjunction with army forces ashore in time of war, though in peacetime there is reluctance to train together or produce joint doctrine or procedures. Naval aviation is less effective against ground targets because of its more vulnerable basing mode, smaller bomb loads and more restricted range. The effectiveness of naval gunfire is limited to ranges close to shore, and so on. In short, maritime forces have an important role to play in the land dimension, but that role is secondary to ground and air forces in most cases and will normally be exercised in conjunction with, and under the control of, those forces.

Finally, I question the authors' contention that war at sea should be the number one force planning priority for the 1990s, with war on land in last place due to "breakthroughs in U.S.-Soviet relations" and domestic pressures for reductions in defense spending. Surely one must agree that a U.S.-Soviet confrontation, however improbable, is unlikely to take place only at sea. In the same vein, pressures to cut military spending are not synonymous with arguments to target specific capabilities or services. While deep cuts in land forces may be inevitable, one wonders how that leads to the conclusion that conflicts on land are therefore less likely, while conflicts at sea are more so.

In my view the authors do a service in turning our thoughts toward Third World contingencies and sea control and away from the more extreme and high-risk scenarios which prevailed in the mid and late 1980s. Nevertheless, the military services

must strive to develop forces and strategic approaches within an overarching framework which recognizes the close linkages and cooperation demanded by the existing strategic environment. It should not be possible to write about strategy, in any dimension, in terms of a single service. Why do we keep doing so?

Richard D. Hooker, Jr.
Captain, U.S. Army
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From Mist in the Pulpit to Fog in the Pews

Sir,

I take issue with Claude Buss's description of "Asia-Pacific" geopolitics in "Strategic Choices and Emerging Power Centers in the Asia-Pacific Region" (Spring 1990). His nomenclature seemed to me to be needlessly vague. Perhaps his other readers intuitively knew what he meant by "region" and "power center"; I did not. I found myself in the position of arbitrarily imposing meaning by assumption—an uncomfortable and tenuous position at best.

One wonders what degree of political, social, cultural, or geographical propinquity Buss requires for inclusion in this region. I assume that "Asia-Pacific" refers to lands and peoples of Asia in contact, directly or indirectly, with the Pacific Ocean. There was no indication as to how far removed a land or people must be from the Pacific before it is no longer part of "the Asia-Pacific region." I suspect, from the tenor of the article, that Tibet currently falls outside while Mongolia may well fall within "the Asia-Pacific region." On the other hand, Buss clearly includes member states of ASEAN within the region, no matter how far removed from the Pacific.

Region was most ambiguously used throughout the article. For instance, is "Northeast Asia" a region within Buss's "Asia-Pacific region" (as implied in the last paragraph of page 67)? Or does Japan's "regional predominance" extend to the entire Asia-Pacific region, from Australia to the Northeast Asia power center? In either case, what parameters give Japan "predominance" over the Soviet part of Northeast Asia?

Where is the Northeast Asia power center? Or, for that matter, where are the Asia-Pacific power centers? Is a "center" a concentration of something, like a shopping or medical center? Or is it a focal point around which similar identities cluster, like a center of gravity? What is the difference between a "power center" and a "region"? If Buss means a center of gravity, then do not "emerging powers" (emerging from what we do not know) by their displacement from the "center" skew the center-point of the universe in question?

Buss's centers are akin to Pascal's horrible sphere, with periphery indeterminable and a center that may be anywhere. They are too amorphous to contain information. I realize that in a time of turmoil and change it is best to keep one's options open, to maintain a flexible posture, but if we are to communicate we really must have

a bit more rigor than is offered by Mr. Buss. If in our rush we must do injustice to language, perhaps we should check fire.

It is my belief that unintentional ambiguity is bad. It produces opportunities for misunderstanding. In the case of Claude Buss's discussion of "emerging power centers in the Asia-Pacific region," I sense real mist in the pulpit which distance must transform into fog in the pews.

Tom Magnuson
Durham, North Carolina

Allegations, Conspiracy, and Fabricated Claims

Sir,

In his book review of John J. Mearsheimer's book *Liddell Hart and the Weight of History* (Spring 1990 *Review*), Robert E. Walters certainly made a very significant point by citing German armor warfare proponent Heinz Guderian's reference to Liddell Hart in his conference notes from an important meeting with Hitler in 1943. Mearsheimer's allegation that Liddell Hart had no actual influence upon Guderian and others involved with German armor warfare is erroneous.

Mearsheimer accuses Liddell Hart and Erwin Rommel's son, Manfred Rommel, of having been in a conspiracy whereby the younger Rommel would falsely claim his father thought well of Liddell Hart, and thus boost Liddell Hart's reputation, in return for which Liddell Hart would refrain from criticizing Field Marshal Rommel. Mearsheimer offers no serious evidence to substantiate this amazing accusation. And there is ample data to demonstrate it is absurd.

On p. 203 of *The Rommel Papers*, Rommel mentioned that he had read and agreed with an article by Liddell Hart criticizing the inadequacies of the British command arrangements in the Middle East. This demonstrates that the Germans thought enough of Liddell Hart during the war to follow and translate his writings and Rommel thought enough of him to read and agree with him. On p. 299 of *The Rommel Papers*, Rommel mentioned British military critics whom he thought the British should have paid attention to. Rommel's wartime friend, General Bayerlein, footnoted this statement with the explanation that Rommel was referring to J.F.C. Fuller and Liddell Hart. Mearsheimer does not explain who Rommel really meant if not these two. In this footnote, Bayerlein went on to explain that Rommel had a high regard for Liddell Hart and that he and Rommel had many discussions about Liddell Hart during the war.

This footnote by Bayerlein appeared in the German edition of Rommel's memoirs, published under the title *Krieg ohne Hass* [*War without Hate*] well before Manfred Rommel got in touch with Liddell Hart about having his father's memoirs published in English. Mearsheimer mentions that Manfred Rommel communicated with British Brigadier Desmond Young, who in December 1949 wrote to Liddell Hart, who wrote back to Rommel's wife and received a reply from Rommel's son, who told both Young and Liddell Hart of his father's high regard for the latter. Then in March of 1950,

Desmond Young mentioned in a letter to Manfred Rommel that Liddell Hart might be helpful in getting Erwin Rommel's memoirs published in English. And presto, Mearsheimer asserts that this innocuous suggestion by Desmond Young proves a conspiracy to inflate Liddell Hart's reputation and proves that any claims connecting Liddell Hart with Field Marshal Rommel are falsified. Obviously, Mearsheimer's insinuations can't be taken seriously.

Mearsheimer also alleges that Liddell Hart filled his book *The German Generals Talk* with fabricated claims by Germans regarding how much he had influenced them in military matters. Mearsheimer's allegations about that book are based upon a book review by Captain Frank Mahin, U.S. Army, which appeared in a 1949 issue of *Military Affairs*. However, an examination of the actual text of Liddell Hart's book reveals *only one* statement by a German about Liddell Hart's influence. This is found on p. 91 and is a quote by General von Thoma referring to not only Liddell Hart, but also J.F.C. Fuller. Mahin's claims about the content of *The German Generals Talk* are erroneous. Mearsheimer should have examined the actual text of the book before accepting Mahin's book review.

Joseph Forbes
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The Navy: "Ready for Anything" but . . .

Sir,

In January of 1988, while attending one of the few officer-level mine warfare courses at the Fleet Mine Warfare School in Charleston, South Carolina, I had the uncomfortable task of advising two enthusiastic ensigns that their best bet was to obtain surface warfare officer qualification on their minesweepers as soon as possible and get out of mine warfare with equal haste. Sadly, this recommendation has proven professionally correct for more than 70 years for active duty officers. As a reserve officer, however, it was to my advantage to seek training in this field to support assignments to Inshore Undersea Warfare (IUW & MIUW), Naval Control of Shipping (NCSO), Naval Reserve Force minesweepers (MSO), Craft of Opportunity (COOP) units, afloat staffs, or Maritime Defense Zone (MDZ) units. This can't be the right way to run a Navy, but it may be the Naval Reserve path for the 1990s.

Recognition of mine warfare has been overdue since the 1905 Russo-Japanese War, when major strategic and tactical actions were accomplished without benefit of the "big guns" of either fleet. Although mines have none of the glamor or social esteem of the "Home Fleet," the "High Seas Fleet," or the "Carrier Battle Group," properly employed, mines can thwart any maritime strategy. Unfortunately, the unrestricted line of the U.S. Navy is artificially divided by platform politics, with the possible exception of the Special Warfare (113X) and Special Operations (114X) designators. Surface Warfare was the last platform community to establish a separate designator, which assists officers of a certain background and experience in gaining certain "high value" billets and commands by limiting competition to only those with the correct

designators. This, however, does not help the mine warfare, amphibious warfare, or logistics support specialists within a community which still considers "destroyermen" to be some sort of cut above.

When international laws were enacted in 1907 to control the use of naval mines, there were only "line officers" and a staff corps. The Kaiser's Navy forced the concept of submarine warfare down the throats of many "battle line" admirals during World War I. During World War II the Japanese Navy did the same for naval air, while Doenitz's U-Boats were making destroyer or escort duty the promotion ticket of the future, and Italian frogmen invented special warfare—all to the dismay of the "sea lords" of the Admiralty. Despite solid efforts by North Korea, the Viet Cong, Libya and Iran, no one has done significant damage to apparent Pentagon indifference concerning mine warfare, or other required specialties. It seems reasonable that Surface Warfare might one day entertain the possibility that a balanced fleet and community needs mine warfare specialists (and amphibians, as well as highly skilled logistics support officers). With two dozen mine countermeasure ships, a dozen mobile mine assembly groups and a few mine warfare squadrons, plus many major staff billets, one would think that a viable career path could be established.

In 1987 the Navy declared itself to be ready-for-anything in the Persian Gulf and went about calling in NCSO-qualified reservists to ride reflagged merchant ships. "Anything" did not include mines, and in 1988, although few knew it, the call went quietly out for qualified mine warfare officers from the reserve community to shoulder some of the load of the active duty staff at MINEWARCOM. Here is surely the justification for some of the reserve budget during the forthcoming decade of Gramm-Rudman. This is also a good direction for the whole Naval Reserve Force.

There will always be "holidays" in the personnel and force structure of our peacetime fleet. The maritime strategy of the 1990s will be under sweeping revision, depending on how stable Eastern Europe and the new Soviet policies become. It is time for the Naval Reserve to seek new, unglamorous missions, and to support them fully by building a cadre of "trained and ready" specialists. For example, it was a good thing that qualified NCSO reservists were ready, willing, and able to ship out to the Middle East. The sad fact that many were U.S. Merchant Marine officers out-of-work due to the lack of proper government support for a U.S. flag fleet is worthy of consideration.

Now consider Naval Officer Billet Code (NOBC) 9064: Staff Mine Warfare Officer. How many reserve units have this as a primary or secondary requirement for one of their billets? While I don't know the answer either, I do know that it is less than there could be. There should be an NOBC 9064 billet in every Naval Reserve afloat and major shore staff, MIUW and IUW, NCSO, MDZ, COOP and NRF MSO unit, and maybe a few deep draft ship units as well. There also needs to be a formal, detailed NOBC 9064 qualification program ("career path," if you will) managed by the Naval Reserve MINEWARCOM staff, with billets, school quotas, and a NATO Exchange Program, as required. If the fleet is going to ignore its possible need of qualified mine warfare officers, should it not become a mission of the Naval Reserve to have an available list for recall?

There are probably many reserve warfare specialties which could be discovered by this type of thinking. An outcry was heard against the Third World use of toxic gas, but has there been an increased number of requests for chemical warfare training from active duty officers? I doubt it, primarily because it is not on the main track to promotion and advancement, and besides, the Army runs all those schools in the desert somewhere, and who wants to go TAD to a desert just to get a ticket punched? Is this an area where the Naval Reserve Force of the 1990s could earn its keep?

What of amphibious operations (NOBC 9062), base security, shore patrol, camouflage, and other “low intensity conflict” skills? We watched the NRF MSO’s get underway without their reserve crews, but when it came to qualified specialists—shipping control and mine warfare officers—the fleet took volunteers without stirring up a political debate. Shouldn’t this be the Persian Gulf “lessons learned” for the Naval Reserve? I suggest it is high time to determine these back burner mission areas, before the budget axe starts swinging.

Once we decide what might be the best reserve warfare specialties of the 1990s, then we must identify the billets which should require them and develop detailed training programs to *master* them. We don’t need Navy schools if excellent Army, Marine Corps, Air Force or Coast Guard programs are in place. We do need correspondence courses; there hasn’t been one for mine warfare since most of us were commissioned, despite an excellent unclassified publication by the U.S. Naval Institute (i.e., *Weapons that Wait* by Hartmann, 1979). If reservists lack a correspondence course, then let’s get a team from our reserve CNET and MINEWARCOM units to develop one and make it available for the professional benefit of the Total Force.

Finally, we must have tracking programs and program managers—not necessarily New Orleans—who can instantly provide the CNO, Fleet CINC, or COMINEWARCOM with complete recall bills of qualified specialists for any number of minor but critical missions. The next time there is a request for merchant ship riders, mine warfare specialists, or whatever, let us be “trained and ready” and *identifiable* for the special needs of the twenty-first century. If we do our homework, then the 90-day recall of specialists can be justified, quiet, quick and easy.

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“ . . . all war consisted in causing trouble without much hope of advantage.”

— Evelyn Waugh, *Officers and Gentlemen*. Boston, 1955. p. 324