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In My View

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Ion Oliver

IN MY VIEW . . .

Realities and Empty Rhetoric

Sir,

Ensign Modly's analysis of Japan's 1,000 mile SLOC protection concept, "The Rhetoric and Realities of Japan's 1,000-Mile Sea-Lane Defense Policy," in the January-February issue elucidates several significant first-level observations with unusual clarity. His exposition is admirable no less for his restraint in not drawing certain obvious conclusions, and his choice to shun second-level observations may stem from optimism in the rationality of US security politics. I would briefly note five points in his essay which I feel capture the essence.

Item 1. First, "the 1,000 mile policy lacks the financial commitment to defense which the policy requires." He spotlights the "significant chasm between the political commitment to adopt such a policy and the reality of Japan's efforts to attain the necessary capability." He reminds the reader that although the 1,000 mile policy was developed later than the 1976 Defense Outline Program, that 1976 Program nonetheless "continues to be the guideline for Japanese defense spending" and, moreover, that the 1981 Midterm Defense Plan is silent on the 1,000 mile SLOC policy. *Item 2.* He rightly observes the ". . . 1,000 mile policy implied a Japanese intention to expand its military capabilities in order to play a greater role in its own defense" and, in his very next sentence, he abuts upon a rudely upsetting element. *Item 3.* "This perceived intention, whether real or imaginary was, at least temporarily, extremely valuable in reducing US political pressure and criticism." *Item 4.* Ensign Modly suggests increased Japanese military capabilities "achieving a 1,000 mile defense role . . . would be an advantage to Japan and the United States . . ." but, *Item 5,* the penultimate sentence of his essay, focusing on present realities, contains a marvel of understatement: ". . . if the 1,000 mile SLOC defense policy is to be regarded as anything more than empty rhetoric aimed at fulfilling a political requirement, Japanese defense planning must be reassessed and directed toward creating the necessary capability."

My own views overlap those of Ensign Modly, and move perhaps a little farther down the road. For example, I find a rational explanation for the chasm between policy and finances in the "perceived intention" which, I submit, was merely *perceived*, never *real* at all. What was perceived as commitment was in fact

acknowledgement of responsibility and not a commitment to undertake necessary actions to perform and discharge responsibility. Ensign Modly's assembled information overwhelmingly shows "failure to perform." Admitting paternity is a far cry from coughing up adequate child support payments, but it did "reduce pressure," it was "extremely valuable."

One distinct difference we have is that I perceive disadvantage to Japan and the United States resulting from realizing the proposed power projection capabilities. I believe in the present day context Japan's achieving a 1,000 mile SLOC protection capability would be desrabilizing. Other Pacific Ocean states, particularly the Soviet Union, cannot be expected to share the popular delusion which overlooks the offensive potential inherent in such military capability. Labelling such capabilities defensive suggests either a sanguine faith in good intentions or a distasteful rejection of scenario options in which Japan owns autonomous offensive military potential. Integral to Japan's achieving such power, Japan's likely scenario ad interim presumably extends the United States' role as mercenary/hostage and supplier of the requisite nuclear umbrella/conventional deterrent to shield Japan. And, of course, Japan's continuing whatever minimal appeasement payments are necessary to assure the US plays on in that stellar role.

To return to "intent," let us as a divertissement undertake an exercise in freshman logic. Let us (a), assume there is a Japanese inrent to expand military capabilities and (b), given since expansion suited to SLOC defense is absent from the standing "guideline for defense spending," (c), then what expansion there is cannot be intended for SLOC protection per se. On the other hand, if the perception of an intention is without substance, then "empty rhetoric" must hold substance, exemplifying the judo concept of turning the other's strength to one's own advantage.

Finally, I emphatically agree that "Japanese defense planning must be reassessed," taking this to mean the United States undertake that reassessment and, with it, view again the US security relationship with Japan. Ensign Modly's information inexorably exposes the reader to a framework of institutional, possibly blind, wishful thinking respecting Japan's security politics. A penchant for near-boundless self-deception seems to have taken command, automatically drawing unduly favorable interpretations from every equivocal aspect, imposing optimistic expectations even on clearly negative elements. The melancholy conclusion is that the 1,000 mile SLOC "policy," if not put into order and true context early on, is more likely to tempt a foe into attack than it is to generate meaningful improvement in defensive capability.

William R. Vizzard
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Asian Division

Burden Sharing By Doing Less

Sir,

I would like to comment on the highly perceptive article by Edward A. Olsen in your Jan-Feb 85 issue, "Security in Northeast Asia: A Trilateral Alternative."

The subject article encompasses courageous thinking, and has been long overdue. Indeed, from a slightly broader perspective than that addressed in the article, most prudent analysts can arrive at a similar conclusion: our military commitments to South Korea are inordinate and inappropriate, for at least three political-military reasons.

1) The security requirements can be summarized in a word: "We are Europeans on a separate continent." Most Americans are of some European extraction. This is not to overlook or deny the recent influx of Asian Americans to our shores, or the more longstanding and certainly valuable contributions of Black Americans. Simply as a demographic fact, most Americans hail from Europe. That being so, we share common values and belief systems, the kind of bedrock solidarity that is at the basis of the Nato alliance. This is not the case in Asia, as Professor Olsen so succinctly demonstrates in his comments concerning ROK perceptions of the US Armed Forces as "a bit wimpish." The use of American military force must be constrained by the traditional Western dogma of the Just War Theory, and cannot be employed to the extent that bellicists like Clausewitz would like. However, ROK cultural values do not embrace this typical Western constraint, and, of course, Professor Olsen's comments regarding their attitudes are accurate.

2) Now for the second part of the above phrase: we live on a separate continent. With two large bodies of water to either side of us, and friendly relations with neighbors to our north and south, we have a geographical freedom that is the envy of empires ancient and modern. The possibility is remote that any sizeable military force would be able to successfully invade the heartland of these United States. This being the case, we have the unique opportunity to project our power outward, without the primary consideration of homeland territorial defense. The contrast of the Soviet Union comes immediately to mind. Concerned as they are about homeland defense, especially along the Chinese border, they are fearful of encirclement, and are constrained in their overseas power projection, a recent spate of articles to the contrary notwithstanding. With regard to the value of the Korean Peninsula, considering the kind of strategic calculus outlined above, Dean Acheson drew the pertinent American interests in such a way to exclude the Peninsula. Now that we are so deeply committed, Professor Olsen's comments are well worth considering.

3) My third point is this: all political-military alliances must not only be based on common values, and geographic realities, but must also be understood to have costs and benefits. Professor Olsen has outlined the economic costs of our inordinate commitment. There is another cost: the perception of America in maintaining this alliance. As Professor Olsen stated, "The struggle for human rights is important." America is often criticized for backing the ROK which in the view of many and in the author's words denies "its people the full-fledged democracy they so evidently want and deserve." Another more concrete cost comes to mind: turning North Korea into a "parking lot," may also involve doing the same for New York, Boston, Chicago, Seattle, and San Francisco. A cost to be considered.

I conclude with the author's words, with some modification, to provide a more general applicability: "It is true that the United States faces a strategic threat in [an] area which warrants an American commitment. However, that threat is of greater consequence to our allies than to us, or it would be if it were not for our excessive commitment. Given their ability to contribute to a joint effort and given the pressing

needs of the United States elsewhere in the world, it is both reasonable and prudent that the United States press burden sharing . . . by doing less.”

William M. Shaw II
Major, US Army

Hypothetical War

Sir,

The article by Captain Jampoler in your November-December 1984 issue and the response by Rear Admiral Williams in your March-April 1985 issue serve as potent reminders of the inherent limitations of writing for open publication. The prospective author is adjured to refrain from disclosing classified material and from using references unavailable to the general public. Thus, the presumption that debate on the subject of global war strategy, Soviet intentions, and nuclear submarine capabilities is informed and scholarly must be suspended. Essentially we are reduced to following opinionated and hypothetical treatises put forward by personalities who are, or were, highly authoritative and respected in the performance of their duty, but are severely limited in their powers of persuasion by the rules of publication. That reasonably informed debate does on occasion take place is a tribute to authors and editors. Permit me, then, a few cautious observations on the subject at hand.

Captain Jampoler postulated that NATO responded quickly in a hypothetical war to strategic warning. One should wonder if this implies that Soviet submarines moved in large numbers to where they could attack the SLOCs, that NATO submarines set up chokepoint barriers and moved to trail the anti-SLOC threat, and that similar movement took place in the Pacific?

Judging by the debate over the Soviet bastion concept which is currently raging in the pages of the Naval Institute *Proceedings*, one could probably agree with Captain Jampoler that the Soviets would wage a “diffident”—due to poor intelligence? over caution? low priority?—anti-SLOC campaign, but would argue against his cavalier treatment of the Greenland, Barents, and Norwegian seas campaign. Admiral Williams should have been delighted, however, since he could easily have reasoned that the “sustained Western naval operations” and “U.S. Navy’s ASW campaign” were really euphemisms for SSN search and destroy operations as part of bastion-busting.

Admiral Williams might also have taken issue with the casual observation that NATO “survived the first month of the war substantially intact.” In the general type of naval war-at-sea described by Captain Jampoler, there may be a great likelihood that substantial allied surface and subsurface forces would be lost in imposing such hypothetical damage on the Soviet Navy, thus substantiating Admiral William’s claim for the “truly devastating capabilities of nuclear submarines”—of whatever nation.

A Williams/Jampoler series of broadsides on this subject could be entertaining, instructive, and encouraging of other such exchanges. How about it?

Ralph V. Buck
Captain, US Navy

Secrecy and Imperial Rule

Sir,

Dr. Bok's article "Secrets and Deception: Implications for the Military" (March/April 1985) seems to this reader to be unbelievably naive in its tacit assumption of symmetry between the U.S. and the USSR. The Soviet regime is conspiratorial by its very nature, secrecy and deception are thus endemic to it. The U.S. and its democratic allies are, on the other hand, open societies with very open governmental authorities. Hence her prescription for increasing trust by curbing secrecy in arms limitation negotiations, for example, seems to be singularly misplaced. Irving Kristol has aptly described the Leninist negotiating process as an inversion of Clausewitz: "politics is a continuation of war by other means," and the sooner we accept this insight, the more secure we will be. The author also inveighs against the use of "disinformation" as being counterproductive. Fair enough for the west, but one should not lose sight of the success that the Soviets have had with this technique. Again, the *false assumption of symmetry*. With respect to the author's concern about nuclear destruction, few serious students of strategy seem to be so much worried about Soviet nuclear attack as they are by the "salami" tactics which are currently working rather successfully in Central America.

In a preceding article in the same issue, Professor Alvin Z. Rubinstein analyzes Soviet activities in the Third World and concludes that the "correct" model to use in describing Soviet behavior is the "imperial" model. While correct as far as it goes, this interpretation neglects the important role which legitimacy plays in establishing a government's right to rule. In the modern western world (i.e., since 1500 AD) two and only two theories of legitimacy have reigned: the "divine right of kings" (read "rule by an elite"—arguably descended from the ancient Roman Empire or even earlier from ancient Egypt) and the concept of "covenant" (arguably descended from the covenant of the ancient Israelites with Yahweh). It is this reader's opinion that legitimacy is very important to the Soviets because of the psychological impact which it carries. Because Marxism is based upon historical determinism, a sort of "divinity," and upon rule by an elite, one can argue and argue convincingly that Soviet legitimacy is a twentieth century analogue of the "divine right of kings." Hence Marxist ideology is essential to the Soviets even though, in their heart of hearts, they believe not a word of it.

Robert C. Whitten, Jr.
Commander, USNR, Ret.

Okinawa Operation

Sir,

As the author of several books on the Okinawa operation, I enjoyed Admiral Colwell's article on intelligence and the Okinawa campaign immensely, and, in fact, learned a number of things of which I had no prior knowledge. A mystery still is the

name of the civilian who provided the Fifth Fleet with much good information concerning Okinawa's beaches and terrain.

If I might, I would like to correct one error which Admiral Colwell made and that concerns the fact that when General Buckner was killed, Marine Lieutenant General Roy S. Geiger, commander of III Amphibious Corps, was immediately named by Admiral Nimitz to take over Tenth Army. This action was taken as the result of General Buckner having named General Geiger as his successor during discussions at Schofield Barracks when the planning for Okinawa was going on in early 1945. Tenth Army was the largest command a Marine general officer had ever headed to that date. I have no comment on the fact that the Army couldn't wait to rush General Stilwell, who was senior to Geiger, to Okinawa to retrieve the command of the Tenth Army for the Army.

Two other notes. When the Tenth Army attack south was held up on 19 April, the Marines were all for conducting a landing behind the Japanese Thirty-Second Army on the southeast Okinawan coast at Minatoga. The 2d Marine Division, which had been employed in feint landings here on L Day was ready and willing to conduct that combat landing, but General Buckner, despite strong Marine recommendations to do so, was unwilling, and perhaps a golden opportunity to end the Okinawa campaign earlier fell by the wayside.

Admiral Colwell mentioned the use of Sonne strip photography of the beaches which provided intelligence of a nature hitherto not available. If I am not wrong, the first time Sonne photography was used at Okinawa, and a basic reason it was so successful was because it was color photography which gave dimensions and perspectives of the beaches which were eminently useful to the API specialists.

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