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U.S. policy requires that the Navy have the capability to operate on the northern flank of NATO, specifically in the Norwegian Sea. The vulnerabilities and strengths of both the allied and Soviet positions are discussed in this examination of the balance of power in the area.

U.S. NAVAL FORCES AND THE NORTHERN FLANK OF NATO

by

F.J. (Bing) West, Jr.

Introduction. A recent article on the future of the U.S. Navy stated:

... a draft internal Defense Department document, the Consolidated Guidance, ... prepared by the staff of the Secretary of Defense, concluded that the aircraft carrier had no role on the flanks of NATO.... Some territory, such as Northern Norway, is like Berlin in that it cannot be directly protected by U.S. military power....¹

The purpose of this paper is to assess the net trends in naval capabilities that determine any U.S. naval role in contributing to the economic, political, or territorial integrity of Norway.

Underlying the turmoil about the future of the U.S. Navy are four basic pressures for force reduction. The first pressure is a perspective on international politics. This holds that there is an "arms race" that, in naval matters, is provoked by U.S. threats to sensitive Soviet targets and forces. According to this view, international tensions will abate and stability be lessened

probability of conflict, will be enhanced if the U.S. Navy forgoes "offensive" systems that threaten the Soviets. A Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, for instance, argues that "The large carrier... caused the Soviets to react by building up their Navy.... Deemphasis of the carrier in its role against land targets in the Soviet Union... would influence the Soviet Union to slow the buildup of its Navy as it sees the threat of the carrier diminish."² In other words, if the U.S. Navy shows "restraint" by moving towards a less capable force, so too will the Soviet Union.

The second pressure to reduce the U.S. Navy is defense strategy. Many defense analysts reason thusly:

1. NATO War requirements are the basis of design of our general-purpose forces;

2. the land war on the Central Front comprises the key to the NATO War;

3. therefore the Navy is the least useful service in World War III; yet it receives as many dollars as the Army or Air Force;

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4. as measured by numbers of combat troops, armor, artillery and even aircraft, the Central Front balance grossly favors the Pact;

5. so to fit our force design to our declared strategy at the current fiscal ceiling requires a reduction in naval forces and an increase in Army and Air Forces.

Money is the third pressure to reduce naval forces. Each year less of the nation's wealth is devoted to national security. In FY 77 defense cost 5.2 percent of GNP; in FY 78, 5.0 percent; in FY 79, 4.9 percent.³ Secretary Brown has pointed out that these are the lowest percentages in decades, and stand in contrast to the trends in the Soviet Union. The Soviets devote 13 to 15 percent of GNP to military force, with an annual increase in real resources of 3 to 4 percent.⁴ Given this disparity in resource allocation, on a *priori* grounds it can be argued that there is simply not enough room in the U.S. defense budget to match the threat on NATO's Central Front, retain an acceptable strategic nuclear balance, and carry out naval missions. Something has to give.

The fourth pressure for reduction is a belief that the trend in military technology is running against the surface ship. The issue here is doubt that, even if U.S. policy goals and resource inputs were maintained at their current level, the U.S. Navy will, a decade from now, be a credible instrument of force in high threat areas. Northern Norway has become the test scenario when analyzing "high threat areas." Is northern Norway becoming, in terms of the conventional balance of power, another Berlin? The United States has pledged to reinforce Norway, a fellow partner in NATO. The question is: could we?

This paper will address that issue in terms of U.S. naval capabilities. These capabilities will be discussed under three settings:

● a conventional World War II, or NATO War;

● a sudden Soviet attack upon Norwegian territory without an attack against the Central Front;

● a Soviet threat of force to resolve a Norwegian-Soviet crisis.

The Traditional Case:

Deterrence of a Major Soviet Attack in the Context of World War III

Direct defense only.

Reassurance of reinforcement by sea control versus Soviet submarines and aircraft. Secretary of Defense Brown has said that the U.S. Navy will be sized to insure, in conjunction with other allied forces and commonsense, the reinforcement of our ally Norway.⁵ To operate naval forces with credibility in the Norwegian Sea is not merely added insurance against and deterrence of the improbable conflict called a NATO War. It is also a demonstration of the West's determination to deny Soviet efforts to achieve gradual peacetime dominance of the seas adjacent to Eurasia.

In a battle for the Norwegian Sea, after the beginning of hostilities, allied forces would face three threats: surface forces, aircraft, and submarines. U.S. documents often refer to an allied anti-submarine and antiair "barrier" across the Greenland, Iceland, U.K. (GIUK) gap. The purpose is to prevent Soviet attacks against the main sea line of communication from the east coast of the United States to the west coast of Europe. Norway, however, lies on the Soviet side of this naval Maginot Line.

Many analysts speculate that the Soviets would try to construct their own "barrier" to secure their northern flank (which is opposite northern Norway), protect their SSBNs and retain intact a sizable portion of their navy. Any allied naval movement into the Norwegian Sea for purposes of reinforcing Norway (airlift alone could not carry requisite tonnage) would encounter stiff Soviet submarine opposition.

The World War II image of "wolf-pack" tactics against our surface task forces is not applicable. For fear of intercept and position identification, submariners are loath to communicate. Instead, Soviet submarines would most likely be assigned patrol sectors in which they would run at low speeds while awaiting the high speed and noisy arrival of aggressive allied naval forces. The waiting game is a particularly good tactic for the Soviet diesel-electric submarine, often referred to as a "floating mine."

Success in underwater warfare centers around detection, primarily by acoustic pressure waves. A direct and quantitative measure of acoustic effectiveness is the figure of merit (FOM). The FOM measures the transmission loss in decibels of the sound from a target which can be tolerated with a 50 percent probability that the target will still be detected. A decibel is a logarithmic measure of the ratios of units of sound pressure. So a gain of roughly three DB means a doubling of the sound pressure. The FOM is dependent upon the amount of noise radiated by the target, total background noise, the sensitivity of the receiving hydrophone array and the processing of the noise signal by auditory and visual displays such that a trained operator has a 50 percent chance of distinguishing the incoming noise signal from the ever-present background noise.⁶

Recently Secretary of the Navy Graham Claytor commented upon these latter two acoustic variables: hydro-

phones and signal processing. He said, referring explicitly to "sophisticated detection devices and computers," that "The qualitative edge we hold over the Soviets in both equipment and personnel is awesome."⁷

Specifically, what does this mean? Let us compare two submarines in the Norwegian Sea. (figure 1) Submarine A relies on audio signal processing with good hydrophones, while Submarine B has computer-assisted audio and visual processing or "sophisticated detection devices and computers."

Because in a submarine-versus-submarine battle victory usually goes to he who detects first, the Secretary of the Navy's use of the word "awesome" is understandable if one believes the United States holds a substantial lead in computer technology over the Soviet Union (and, of course, is not transferring that technology). To the extent that in the Norwegian Sea attack submarines would encounter one another in one-on-one engagements, quality rather than quantity would determine the outcome of the campaign. Before we sent surface forces into the Norwegian Sea, then, we would dispatch allied submarines and ASW aircraft to counter the Soviet submarines.

If, however, the movement of surface vessels into the Norwegian Sea could not be delayed for several weeks while an underwater campaign was prosecuted, then obviously some allied combatants would be sunk by the Soviet submarines. However, strong advances in ship and aircraft ASW prosecution

	Submarine A (Audio)	Submerine B (Signal Processing)
FOM in db	72	93
Direct Path Detection	3,300 yards	8,000 yards
First Bottom Bounce	Impossible	22,000 yards
First Convergence Zone	Impossible	58,000 yards

Fig. 1—Submarine Detection Ranges⁸

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also have been made, particularly in passive acoustic arrays and signal processing. Soviet submarines by themselves cannot 'credibly challenge naval use of the Norwegian Sea.

The prime challenge is Soviet Naval Aviation (SNA)—primarily *Badger* and *Backfire* bombers—each carrying one to three air-to-surface missiles. The bombers are the worst threat because the Soviets can mass them (while they cannot mass submarines) to saturate the defenses of a task force. As this problem lies at the heart of naval warfare in a conventional World War III, it cannot be addressed in one setting such as the Norwegian Sea. Nor can we assume that other settings have the same properties or are lesser included cases.

Rather, one must ask: where do the allies want to be when the war ends? Part of the answer: in control of the major seas, including the Norwegian and Mediterranean Seas, the Persian Gulf, and Western Pacific. Therefore the measure of effectiveness is the net residual naval (including usable land-based air) power between the allies and the Soviet Union. For instance, if in one campaign we lost 50 percent of our carrier inventory while the Soviets lost 30 percent of their naval bomber inventory, the net trend for continuing the war at sea would be unfavorable to the allies.

A series of war games, operations analyses and professional military judgments point toward some general conclusions:

- in a global war, the SNA is the prime threat to our surface fleet because it can (while submarines cannot) mass a large number of missiles and threaten to saturate antimissile defenses;

- to destroy the SNA, sufficient numbers of interceptors must be vectored in time to the axis of attack; and

- by massing four to five CVs, a continuous stream of SNA attacks can be blunted or reduced below limits acceptable to the attacker, even when

one or two carriers are placed out of action.

With strike radii of 1,500 to 2,500 miles or more, the SNA bombers threaten all feasible approaches to the Eurasian landmass. In WW III, it is essential that the SNA as a cohesive force be destroyed—either in the air or at their bases. Allied land-based and sea-based air will be needed to do this. Because the Soviets possess interior lines of communication, they can shift their bombers from one theater to another. Our carrier battle groups can and must likewise be shifted in force. We do not have the reasonably assured access to land airfields to place interceptors athwart each major theater of SNA operations: the Norwegian Sea and North Atlantic; the Mediterranean; the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean; and the Western Pacific.

Because they are flying over water without fighter escort and must radiate while trying to penetrate to a launch point, Soviet bombers are extremely vulnerable, as were our 1942-43 daylight bombing efforts over Germany. Only by massing carriers is it possible to reduce allied losses of surface ships while crippling the SNA. Our task forces should then have sufficient net residual power to shift from the Norwegian Sea to other theaters, assuring that we physically control the critical seas by war's end and that we do not have to seek, at the negotiating table, permission to enter areas where we dared not venture during hostilities.

The *Phoenix* air-to-air missile of the F-14 will take a heavy toll of Soviet bombers. The Soviets must disable the bases (the carriers) from which the interceptors are launched. What the Soviets must do before their bomber losses become intolerable is to launch enough missiles in a short time to wear down, or "leak" through the antimissile defenses of the task force. So for the allies the nub of the problem is not shooting down bombers: that can be

done. The challenge is to shoot down or spoof missiles in a heavily cluttered electronic warfare environment.

It is in this area of antimissile defense that the most notable strides in American naval warfare are occurring. As in ASW, in antimissile defense the trends emphasize microelectronics and high-speed computers. Rapidity in target solution and launch at several near simultaneous incoming missiles are prerequisite for successful defense. The trend in fleet antimissile defense is such that the Deputy Chief of U.S. Naval Operations for Surface Warfare has commented: "... new systems and capabilities, such as the F-14 Phoenix and the Aegis anti-air warfare missile system... will make surface ships less vulnerable over the next decade."⁹

In the Norwegian Sea, land-based air (LBA) as protection for the eastern flank of the allied fleet compounds the threat of unacceptable loss rates to the Soviet bomber force. Of course, the Soviet bombers have the range to swing around North Cape and attack ships from the seaward, or western, side. But their axis of attack is thereby limited.

LBA also can play a major role in several other campaigns in northern Norway. This will be discussed in subsequent sections, as will uses of the Soviet surface fleet.

In sum, U.S. naval planners believe that, assuming 3 percent annual real growth, the allied fleet, properly employed, could defeat Soviet naval forces and control the Norwegian Sea. The keys to the battle would be the effectiveness of Soviet bomber coordination on the one hand and of allied antimissile systems on the other. In allocating forces to the battle, both sides would have to assess carefully the effect of losses upon their residual power worldwide. Yet not to allocate powerful forces would assure defeat. While the analogy should not be overdrawn, a naval campaign in the Norwegian Sea could be like the Battle of Midway. On

paper, the sides are evenly matched in terms of their objectives. So victory would be determined not by overwhelming force but rather by shrewd maneuver, the avoidance of mistakes and the use of a few tricks which do not appear in papers or technical assessments.

U.S. Marines in a Preenforcement Role Ashore. So far we have concentrated on engagements at sea after the war has begun. Much U.S. defense planning, however, emphasizes "pre-enforcing" our NATO allies during a period of tension. While two of the three active U.S. Marine division/air wings (which are part of U.S. naval forces) are assigned as the NATO general reserve, the marines pay close attention to a possible role in the Allied Command Europe (ACE) unit assigned to northern Norway. (The Canadians are the only forces dedicated to reinforcement of the Northern Flank.) SACEUR does not want to assign his marine reserves to a particular theater. SACLANC does not want plans that automatically assume the marines pass from his theater of operations to that of SACEUR. The marines are in the unenviable position of being over-committed in contingency planning, underutilized in joint exercises and discounted by civilian defense analysts.

Within the Pentagon bureaucracy, however, there is steady movement toward assuming northern Norway as a marine-related theater.

The climate has proved an almost insurmountable obstacle to the perceived effectiveness of most foreign troops contemplating operations anywhere north of Tromsø.¹⁰ So marines are now receiving cold weather training in northern Norway and cold weather items have become part of their budget.

The potential worth of pre-enforcement on the ground in northern Norway is high. The Norwegian Cold Weather Brigade of some 2,000 men confronts a

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standing force of some 20,000 Soviet infantry in the Kola region. While the Norwegians can quickly double or triple their commitment in the north, the Soviets just prior to World War III would face the possible problem of reallocating forces and equipment from other Western theaters. It is the equipment aspect that limits Soviet forces in the north. To attack "across compartment" or across mountain ridges in cold weather requires a high and specialized equipment investment per unit of manpower.

It is likewise the equipment aspect, as well as flexible task organization and hard training, that make the U.S. Marines valuable reinforcements in northern Norway. A marine brigade of 5,000 men with 100 helicopters provides the nucleus for a mobile defense. Helicopters permit the rapid shift of fighting units from sector to sector, enabling a strategic defense to be conducted by a tactical offense. Marine reliance upon lightweight artillery and air, rather than armor, is cited as a liability on some battlefields. But in the compartmented terrain in northern Norway, fire support designed for helilift becomes an asset, given judicious prepositioning of war stocks at several dispersed bases.

Pivotal to the land battle for northern Norway would be Soviet effectiveness in resupply of their frontline troops and in protection of their sea and land lines of communication. Critical to the allies are resupply, radio communications for fire support and the coordination of Norwegian and allied ground forces.¹¹ The terrain in northern Norway resembles, to U.S. Marines, some areas along the old DMZ in Vietnam—a nightmare for ground attack by infantry. Soviet tactics would probably include amphibious and heliborne movements as well as perhaps a paradrop. It would be a small unit war, with long, vulnerable and vital supply lines for the aggressor. The attacking forces would be

vulnerable to an aggressive mobile defense. Engineers would be needed to try to keep the airfields operational after Soviet air attacks. The off-runway capability of the AV-8 VSTOL would enhance close air support. The marine brigade would have to disembark with supplies for 30 to 60 days as resupply would be tenuous.

To disembark the marine brigade before fighting occurred would require all currently available amphibious shipping in the Atlantic and a warning time of 20 days. The President would probably start marines moving on ships before making the politically difficult decision to airlift American troops to Europe.

Would a marine brigade make a difference in northern Norway? Probably so, if the marines were trained and equipped for cold weather. Many doubt that this is currently the case, referring to USMC cold-weather equipment as "from the dark ages."¹² Marine training has been criticized as "emphasizing flexibility at the cost of not being able to optimally perform a specific task," with inadequate preparation for cold-weather operations.¹³ However, the marines have the mobility and the small unit flexibility suitable to the terrain. Enemy numbers are not overwhelming. Major airfields in the north might be held, presenting a threat to Kola and supporting NATO naval movements in the Norwegian Sea. Heavy attrition could be exacted, if the Soviets chose to attack the region, as the area favors the defense. To support attacking forces the Soviets would have to pay a heavy price in resources taken from other fronts.

The air battle over land must be considered as well. It is here that the Soviets face a powerful deterrent, or dilemma. The Soviets would desire to knock out quickly allied air by attacking the air bases and associated communications and supplies. (In fact, World War III probably would begin not with a ground assault or a naval "D-Day Shoot-Out," but with a massive air

bombardment against allied air in several theaters.)

However, the Soviets face the problem of bomber allocation among theaters. They must also calculate their losses as they conduct airstrikes. Fighter/bomber attack coordination is not a strong point in Soviet air tactics. Norway is procuring 80 F-16s, half of which presumably could be committed in a battle in northern Norway. A task-organized U.S. marine brigade would add 40 fighters, 60 VSTOL (off-runway) close air support attack aircraft, 20 SAM launch sites (Hawk), 8 engineer companies for runway repair, and 30-60 days of supplies. Figure 2 relates these capabilities to significant problems in the defense of northern Norway.

The preenhancement of northern Norway by 100 or more allied fighter aircraft plus SAM sites would exact

substantial losses upon Soviet bombers. Unfortunately, unclassified models that might provide the basis for quantitative estimates are not known to this author. We know the Soviets are not skilled in penetrating, for the purpose of ground attack, hostile airspace in an electronic warfare environment. If the aggregate aircraft exchange ratio were one allied fighter per Soviet bomber, the cost to the Soviets of air attacks would be prohibitive.

Most probably the Soviets would prefer to seize the relatively few air bases in northern Norway by amphibious, paradrop and overland ground attack. Each of these methods of assault has distinct vulnerabilities if the defenders are forewarned. Therefore any Soviet campaign against northern Norway would have to rely heavily upon deception, boldness, and surprise.

Significant Problems	Marine Brigade Contribution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Air Defense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — All Weather Fighters Lacking — Air Surveillance and Control Inadequate 	40 Fighters 20 Hawk Launchers 120 Redeye Gunners Air Control Squadron
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Troop Mobility & Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Few Troop Helicopters (Fewer than 30) — Few Heavy Lift Helicopters 	54 CH-46 (Lift for Assault 42 CH-53 Elements of 3 Bns 16 CH 1N and Arty.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inadequate Airfields <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Only 2 Military Jet Fields in North (VTOL/STOL Aircraft can operate from 3,000-4,000 foot civilian fields) 	Naval Const. Bn (Repair and 4 Engineer Co. Extend 80 AV-8A Runways)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Logistic Support Limitations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Ground Transportation from South Norway Constrained (Poor Roads) 	60 Days of Supply with Force
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mobile Defense Against Lightly Armed Soviet Amphibious & Paratroop Units 	4 Infantry Bns. (16 Rifle Companies) 48 Artillery Pieces

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"Beta," or Offset, Deterrence by Threats to Kola.

We have so far discussed two U.S. naval roles in the direct defense of northern Norway: a naval campaign for control of the Norwegian Sea and the battle on land. However, why would the Soviets attack northern Norway in a conventional World War III? That the Soviet Navy would like to secure the North Flank is probably not a compelling rationale in the Kremlin, given the opportunity costs. The Kola, however, is the richest piece of small military real estate in the world. It is the hub of the Soviet Navy (including air and submarine bases); it also has strategic nuclear intelligence and warning facilities. Norwegian air bases 300 miles away threaten a variety of high-value targets. Their degradation during the conventional phase would affect Soviet performance in a nuclear war, which the Soviets consider the near-inevitable consequence of Western desperation as the conventional war is lost. It is to protect the Kola that the Soviets would attack northern Norway. Avowed allied intentions before the war not to strike Kola would hold little credibility in the Kremlin. It is a matter of geography and distance, not good or foolish intentions. Once war begins, a reasonable Soviet planner cannot tolerate the existence of allied airfields less than 300 miles from extremely sensitive targets.

While systems that threaten the Kola help to deter Soviet attack, they do not necessarily help to defend if deterrence fails. In the 1950s, U.S. efforts focused on deterrence by tactical nuclear threats against the Kola. In the 1960s, such threats were replaced by efforts at direct defense.

With the advent of precision-guided munitions and excellent targeting information, the potential exists for conventional munition threats to Kola. As previously mentioned, carriers are needed in the Norwegian Sea to defeat the Soviet *Backfires* that otherwise

could deny that sea to any allied surface combatant or resupply ship. Carriers carry attack aircraft as well as fighters. From the Norwegian Sea, they are within range of the Kola. These aircraft can provide close air support. They also can be used to attack systems in the Kola before (or after) those systems attack the allied naval forces. We may want to exploit a Soviet vulnerability, regardless of whether the Soviets had attacked Norway. This is a sensitive issue best left ambiguous in peacetime. The point is that the Kola is put at risk not by American intentions but by the physical capabilities of the kinds of U.S. naval forces that would be applied to the defense of northern Norway.

Because of the depth of defenses around high-value targets in the Kola, substantial losses of U.S. aircraft must be accepted in a nonnuclear war. In relation to the payoff, however, these losses need not be prohibitive if all assets are carefully coordinated. Much of the enemy defense structure around these targets must be degraded before the major strikes go in.

The greatest threat will be from enemy interceptors. This determines two aspects of required strategy. First, for the initial phase, numbers of U.S. fighters must be maximized. This can be accomplished by using three to five carriers and by capitalizing on the ability of the future A-18-equipped carrier attack squadrons to fill air superiority requirements supplementing the F-14s prior to returning to the attack phase. Second, land-based tactical air units may be used against Soviet fighter bases to the extent they are available in excess of the needs of the Central Front. Aerial-refueled USAF F-111s based in England and forward-deployed marine A-6Es are both particularly attractive for this mission because of their night all-weather and terrain-following navigation capabilities.

In addition to these existing and programmed capabilities there is also

the real possibility that ground, sea, and air-launched conventionally armed cruise missiles may in the future add a significant contribution to defense suppression. While currently programmed cruise missiles have very limited capability in this respect, future developments in warhead and munition technology may provide a real capability to perform that mission, especially in neutralizing SAMs and degrading interceptor response.

A recent study by the Northrop Corporation, producer of the F-18/A-18, indicates that heavy sortie losses (15-20 percent) in the first few days of combat could be expected. Soviet interceptors in the air, if ground control radars and radios were working, would be destroyed at ratios of 1.2 to 1.6 to one.¹⁴ In a jamming environment with ground control radars subject to anti-radiation missiles, however, the situation could change dramatically for the better as Soviet pilots are limited in their individual dogfighting training.

**The More Worrisome Case:
Deterrence of a Swift Soviet
Assault while United States
Occupied in a Conflict Elsewhere**

World War III is a remote possibility, owing to the nuclear linkage, the costs to all nations involved and the success of the Western alliance in coping with past crises with inherent escalatory potential. Such serious East-West crises will occur in the future as well. There is, then, the problem of deterring a Soviet attack upon northern Norway, for whatever reason, while the political and military attention of the United States and the West in general was focused elsewhere.

In such case the Soviets would have to rely upon surprise and a speedy success. So, conversely, warning time, political resolve to respond and speed of pre-emptive reinforcement and reinforcement (after hostilities have begun) are critical

to the allies. Geography and transit distances give the Soviets distinct relative advantages. The allied strategy must be keyed to insuring that the Soviets believe the beginning will not be the end and that hostilities will continue.

In this way the highly trained and modernized Norwegian diesel submarine force, together with U.S. submarines, can be brought to bear against the Soviet surface fleet, which would be used in a swift move against northern Norway, both in the assault and in the resupply phase. Norwegian submarines need not operate only in Norwegian waters. In a recent article it was alleged that "Norwegian forces plot the movement of four Soviet submarines to and from bases in the Kola every 24 hours."¹⁵ Provided proper torpedoes, Norwegian submarines can seek out whatever types of Soviet naval forces are vulnerable, wherever they might be found. Offensive mining by Norway would come into play as well, as has been alluded to by General Hamre.¹⁶

The regaining of key bases seized by Soviet amphibious troops and paratroops would first require the allied reinforcement of the bases held by the Norwegian Brigade Nord. This reinforcement could be done by theater air transport shuttling from bases farther south, or by amphibious lift. (The latter would, of course, occur after a naval campaign for control of the Norwegian Sea.)

**The Less Traditional (but more likely?)
Case: Deterrence of Bullying in a Crisis
(e.g., North Sea Oil Dispute,
Fishing Laws, etc.)**

The Direct Approach. It can be argued that scenarios that focus on a full-scale allied vs. Soviet war miss the essential nature of the long-term East-West competition. While both sides employ military force as an instrument of policy, neither side seeks combat. The threat of Soviet force can be

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countered or avoided in the first place by Western resolve and capability. Consequently, allied war games and actual operational exercises in the Norwegian Sea and northern Norway serve to deter any Soviet inclination to maneuver military force in the course of Norwegian-Soviet disputes.

The Indirect Approach. Nor should Norwegian diplomatic skill in deflecting the Soviet predisposition toward the threat of force go unheralded. It is not easy to share a common border with the Soviet Union and retain still, as has Norway, the full panoply of human freedoms and democratic pluralism. In determining their overall national security posture, Norwegians understand and take into account Soviet sensitivities.

The Soviet leadership, on the other hand, is undoubtedly aware that Norway is not without considerable leverage in protecting her interests below the threshold of war. If Norway were seriously upset with the outcome of a crisis involving the Soviet Union, there are arrangements available about allied bases or weapons systems that would make the Soviet gain in the crisis not worth its long-term costs to the Soviets.

Conclusion. Western defense analysts should understand that the security requirements of the NATO Alliance are interwoven. The security of the Northern Flank, or any other region, cannot be treated as a compartmented problem. Allied capabilities to secure the Northern Flank force the Soviets, at least partially, onto the defense in that theater in terms of options in a NATO War and of resource allocation during peacetime. Thereby allied capabilities

on the Northern Flank contribute to the security of the main SLOC artery to the Central Front.

This paper opened with the quotation that northern Norway is like Berlin in that it cannot be directly protected by military power. In terms of combat capabilities, that analogy is inappropriate. The balance of power on the Northern Flank exhibits vulnerabilities and strengths in both the Soviet and allied positions.

In Oslo on 12 April 1978 Defense Secretary Brown said: "U.S. strategy . . . is that the U.S. Navy will continue to plan and continue to have the capability to operate in areas of relatively high threat, such as the Northern and Southern Flanks of NATO . . . and specifically the Norwegian Sea."¹⁷

That is the official policy of the United States. It remains to be seen whether resources adequate for that policy will be requested by the Administration and approved by the Congress.

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



Francis J. (Bing) West, Jr. is Director of Strategic Research in the Center for Advanced Research of the Naval War College. He has degrees from Georgetown University and the Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University. Professor West has served as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, as a Project Director in the RAND Corporation, as Assistant to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense, and is a consultant to the Secretary of the Navy. His publications include *The Village* and *Small Unit Actions—Vietnam*.

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