

Naval War College Review

Volume 29
Number 3 *Summer*

Article 6

1976

The U.S. Navy and the Problem of Oil in a Future War

David A. Rosenberg

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Rosenberg, David A. (1976) "The U.S. Navy and the Problem of Oil in a Future War," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 29 : No. 3 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol29/iss3/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

At the end of World War II, military planners realized that domestic U.S. oil reserves would be insufficient in the event of another war. The result was that planners began to address the problem of how to safeguard Middle East, and particularly Persian Gulf, petroleum sources as early as the autumn of 1945. Using recently declassified documents, David Rosenberg points out that strategic concerns about oil supply are not new. More important, he describes the outlook of American military planners in view of their perception of the Soviet threat and limited U.S. capabilities as a result of budget cuts in the early years of the cold war.

THE U.S. NAVY AND THE PROBLEM OF OIL IN A FUTURE WAR:

THE OUTLINE OF A STRATEGIC DILEMMA, 1945-1950

by

David Alan Rosenberg

During late 1974 and early 1975, reports appeared in such publications as *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *Harper's* describing in detail how the United States might, in the event of another oil embargo, militarily intervene to seize Arab oilfields in order to ensure access to that essential commodity. The reports were generally dismissed by senior American policymakers.¹ While it remains to be seen whether the military option will be exercised in the Persian Gulf of the 1970's, recently declassified documents from the late 1940's indicate that speculation about American military action in that area is not a recent development. Between 1947 and 1950, American strategic planners, in particular Navy strategists in Washington and Europe, were deeply concerned about the possibility of losing Middle Eastern oil resources to a powerful Russian

enemy in the event of war. The plans that were prepared and debated within the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the operations that the Navy conducted to meet such a threat are described in this paper.²

The first serious recognition by the United States of the strategic importance of the Middle East and its oil reserves occurred during World War II. While American businessmen, missionaries, and naval officers had been involved with the Arab world of the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean since the birth of the republic,³ it took the emergence of modern military technology with its enormous dependence on oil to force American officials to consider the area one of prime importance. The complex negotiations which took place from 1943 to 1945 among the U.S. Government, the

54 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

oil companies, and British officials who had long considered the Middle East to be within their sphere of influence are beyond the scope of this paper. It is important to note only that those American officials most deeply concerned with insuring that the United States would have access to Middle Eastern oil—in particular Interior Secretary and Petroleum Administrator for War Harold Ickes, Navy Secretary Frank Knox, and Navy Undersecretary and later Secretary James Forrestal—believed that the United States would be unable successfully to “oil another war” on the basis of its domestic reserves. By the end of World War II, there were four American oil companies with heavy investments in the Middle East, with Standard Oil of California and Texaco sharing 100 percent control of all foreign concessions in Saudi Arabia and Bahrein Island. Facilities in the area included a new refinery at Ras Tanura in Arabia, a greatly expanded refinery at Bahrein, and plans in the works for a pipeline from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean.⁴

American military planning for a future emergency began in the fall of 1945. A logical precaution based on wartime experience, such planning consisted primarily of developing intelligence estimates of the Soviet Union's military capabilities and vulnerabilities and its domestic and foreign policies. In addition, an extensive study of “Logistic Estimates of Certain Movements” was undertaken in the Joint Logistics Plans Committee (JLPC) of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) in October. Eleven destinations were considered, including such potential trouble spots as Western Europe, Turkey, North China, Korea, and Mediterranean North Africa. While such contingency estimates can in no way be considered operational plans, it is significant that among the areas considered for the movement of men and material was the Persian Gulf.⁵

Joint War Plans Committee (JWPC) of the JCS initiated a series of studies and plans that would permit the United States to “Reduce the Military and Political Capabilities of the USSR to the extent necessary to deny to the Soviets the ability to impose their will on other Major Powers in order to prevent World Domination by the USSR.” By June 1946, a very tentative strategic concept, which called for a primary offensive in Western Eurasia, an active defensive in the Far East, and a maximum aerial strategic bombardment against vital Soviet targets had been developed. Further studies, under the JCS code name “Pincher,” were then undertaken to assess the feasibility of operations in various specific geographical areas.⁶

In late 1946, as part of the “Pincher” planning, JWPC 485/1 was completed. It dealt with the Persian Gulf area and considered the problem of holding Bahrein and other potential oil-bearing areas in the Trucial Oman region. In line with the bleak assumptions of contingency plans of the time, it assumed that Iraq and Persia would be taken by the U.S.S.R. The study concluded that U.S. petroleum resources might well be insufficient for a major war, but that a more complete analysis of British and American petroleum requirements would be needed before decisions could be made as to what costs would be acceptable in attempting to hold or recapture the Qatif-Bahrein area. It was pointed out that a major effort would be needed to hold the area initially, but that its recapture would probably be even more difficult and costly. This led the Navy planners on the committee to conclude that “if petroleum products from the Persian Gulf area will be required in a reasonable time, Bahrein Island should be held to secure as a base for the recapture of adjacent areas.” As a harbinger of interservice tensions to come, however, this conclusion was not

Air Force planners on the JWPC, pending further analysis.⁷

Concurrent with the completion of JWPC 485/1, the Joint Logistics Plans Committee prepared its own report on "Oil resources in the Bahrein-Trucial Oman Area" as a reference for the JWPC. That report indicated that the area's total estimated resources were between 25.5 and 50.5 billion barrels (as compared to the U.S. "proven" reserves of 21.5 billion barrels) and noted in its conclusions that the main limitation on production from the region was that imposed by refining capacity. If the crude petroleum could be refined elsewhere and additional drilling materials made available in the area, the production rate could be greatly increased.⁸

The completion of these two studies served to point up the need for a detailed assessment of U.S. petroleum requirements in the event of war. Such a need had been recognized as early as May 1946 when the Joint Logistics Committee—the JLPC's parent organization—began work on a massive study of "The Problem of the Procurement of Oil in a Future War." On 10 February 1947, their hundred page report was completed and approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It was extremely pessimistic, although based on the sanguine and highly improbable assumptions that no losses in petroleum resources would be sustained as a result of enemy action and that the United States would not have to aid its allies in meeting oil requirements. The study concluded that:

In a future major war of five years duration, during the period 1947-1951 inclusive, the total United States military and civilian consumption requirements cannot be met after M+3 years by all the then current production in the United States and United States controlled foreign sources, including that in the Near and

Middle East, even with the proposed war drilling, new refinery, and synthetic plant building programs proposed herein as optimistic but realizable.⁹

The conclusions further noted that while the advance buildup of a surplus of petroleum products would eliminate or reduce the above deficit, the loss of Middle Eastern oil production in the early part of the war would offset that surplus, making shortages inevitable. It was also estimated that military requirements for oil would be nearly double those in World War II as a result of the growing reliance on kerosene fueled jet aircraft. The only recommendations the report put forward for JCS approval were that the United States should endeavor to develop as much synthetic petroleum as possible from domestic natural gas, coal, and shale reserves; plan for an expansion in refineries and drilling plants; and attempt to conserve domestic and more easily defensible U.S. controlled foreign oil resources such as those in South America through a maximum peacetime importation of Middle Eastern oil.

Despite the gloomy nature of the JLC's predictions, the report apparently provoked little response within the JCS. One reason for this may be that the Army and the Army Air Force were already engaged in preparing a joint war plan based on the use of atomic weapons which was designed to defeat the U.S.S.R. within 6 months. In such a war, long-range planning for oil consumption would not be necessary. Naval officers and Navy Department officials were not so easily convinced by such nuclear-fueled promises, however. Secretary Forrestal, whose concern over oil resources would soon become a *cause célèbre* as a result of his opposition to the partition of Palestine, wrote a letter to President Truman in March 1947 describing his hopes that newly discovered oil reserves in Alaska might be developed as substantial additions to

56 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

continental U.S. deposits.¹⁰ And Capt. George Anderson who had served on the JWPC and worked on the "Pincher" studies wrote in a memorandum to Vice Adm. Forrest Sherman that he believed that the problem of acquiring oil was so basic that conventional warfare between the United States and the U.S.S.R. would inevitably result in a material stalemate as both sides depleted their reserves.¹¹

Between February and August of 1947, the first joint outline war plans growing out of the "Pincher" studies were presented to the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a basis for industrial mobilization planning. Three separate strategic estimates were put forward based on alternative hypotheses regarding whether or not atomic weapons would be used in a future conflict and whether or not the Mediterranean Line of Communications (LOC) would be available to American forces. In each case, the importance of the Middle East, including both the oilfields and the Cairo-Suez area, was emphasized. The securing of strategic airbases in the latter area was considered to be crucial in any event. The retention or retaking of the oilfields was assigned equal priority in those estimates in which control of the Mediterranean was assumed to be lost, since this would substantially increase U.S. petroleum requirements by forcing all shipping to Cairo-Suez to go around the Cape of Good Hope. While none of these plans received JCS approval or were even given more than a tentative status as preliminary guidance estimates for mobilization, they are significant in that they outlined alternate courses of action that would later be considered in the working out of operational plans under a restricted defense budget.¹²

While the JCS were struggling with basic strategic planning, the international situation seriously deteriorated; the developing crises in Greece and Turkey that prompted the March 1947 declaration of the Truman Doctrine also

cast their shadow over the rest of the Eastern Mediterranean, including the Arab oilfields. American naval officers, who had reinstated a regular American presence in the Mediterranean in 1945 and had seen it made a permanent part of American policy in September 1946, were especially concerned about this situation and the problem of Middle Eastern oil and were seeking solutions. In May 1947, Adm. Richard L. Conolly, Commander of U.S. Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean (CINCNELM), made the first official inspection trip to Saudi Arabia and Bahrein, accompanied by senior naval officers from his staff and Washington.¹³ Two months later, Chief of Naval Operations Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz issued a "Tentative Assignment of Forces for Emergency Operations." Most of these operations were aimed at securing worldwide sea lines of communications and achieving the evacuation of occupation forces in Europe and Asia. Offensive naval and air operations were to begin immediately in the Mediterranean, however, and even more important, CINCNELM and the Commander in Chief, Pacific, were assigned the shared responsibility of preparing forces to occupy and defend Bahrein, including a Pacific based Marine battalion landing team.¹⁴ While a relatively small action in the context of global emergency operations, this tasking did signify a naval commitment to save as much Middle Eastern oil as possible.

In September 1947, Capt. Thomas Kelly, U.S. Navy, a logistics expert who had directed the preparation of the initial draft of the JCS oil procurement study in the JLPC, made an extensive tour of the Near and Middle East. He came away deeply impressed with the area's great potential and even more impressed, and disturbed, by its vulnerability. Noting that "we are playing right into [Russia's] hands...[by] becoming dependent on a source of

supply which she can destroy in a short time and with a minimal effort," he urged that the Navy "immediately initiate plans for defense of the oil producing, loading and refining areas of the Middle East." Kelly specifically recommended that Navy carrier task groups be sent for familiarizing operations in the Persian Gulf and that preparations be made to move forces to the area "in a matter of hours" to protect against airborne assault.¹⁵ His report to Admiral Nimitz apparently reached sympathetic ears for in December a reinforced Marine battalion was permanently added to the U.S. Naval Forces in the Mediterranean, and early in 1948, Task Force 126, U.S. Naval Forces, Persian Gulf, was established to show the flag periodically and to coordinate Navy tankers in transit through the area. While at first no forces were permanently assigned to such duty, a number of American ships, including a carrier task group led by Rear Adm. Harold Martin in March 1948, visited the Persian Gulf and sent back useful intelligence data.¹⁶

Martin's report of his visit to the area is especially fascinating. Extremely impressed by the material and political progress being made by the American oil companies in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, he recommended that the U.S. Government try to make the high esteem with which the oil companies were held by the Arabs work to U.S. military advantage. Noting that definite plans for the area in the event of war did exist and that "the achievement of these ends will be a difficult and even hazardous undertaking if undertaken after hostilities are begun," Martin proposed that the Navy attempt to work out a secret agreement with the oil companies by which the companies would build such needed military facilities as airports, roads, docks, camouflaged command posts, and gun emplacements under the financial guise of Navy fuel purchases. While unsure of

the oil companies' willingness to undertake such tasks, he did believe that no serious obstacles to such an arrangement would be found. He further suggested that the government of King Ibn Saud should be informed of any such plans in order to avoid upsetting the good relations that existed. Finally, he concluded that "we must avoid being too obvious in our interests," for "while visits of courtesy on the part of our Navy are productive of much good, too specific activities in that area would bring down on Saudi Arabia the condemnation of other Arab countries, Russia, and even England who is deeply involved in this area."¹⁷

The Navy's preparations for the defense of Arabian oil coincided with further joint and combined planning efforts to find solutions for present crises and potential military problems. In November 1947, American and British military and diplomatic officials met at the Pentagon to discuss the ramifications of British troop withdrawals from Greece and the general strategic, political, and economic situation in the Eastern Mediterranean/Middle East area. At the same time, contingency plans for American intervention in Greece were prepared. The conferees agreed to, and President Truman approved, the conclusion that preservation of the security of the region was "vital" to U.S. national security and that it was necessary to make clear to the Soviet Union the strength of the U.S. commitment to maintaining peace in the area.¹⁸ Before such American determination could be tested, however, events in Czechoslovakia and Berlin shifted military attention and the focus of strategic planning back to Western Europe, beginning the chain of developments that would eventually leave naval officers alone in their advocacy of measures to retain U.S. control of the Middle Eastern oilfields in the event of war.

In response to the deepening threat

58 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

of war caused by the Berlin situation, the Joint Chiefs of Staff finally overcame interservice differences long enough to consider approving two different short-range emergency war plans. Both plans were derived from the earlier "Pincher" concept and called for main offensive operations in Western Eurasia, a strategic defense in the Far East, a maximum strategic air offensive (now with the use of atomic weapons included as a basic assumption) against the Soviet Union, and the securing of vital bases and lines of communications. Both were based on estimates that any Russian attack would be powerful enough to come close, at least, to taking all of Western Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Middle East, and that the seizure of Middle Eastern oil would be the first Soviet objective in any offensive moves. Finally, both plans included a provision for moving the Mediterranean based Marine battalion landing team to the Bahrein area by naval airlift and commandeered U.S. commercial aircraft "to assist in evacuation of United States nationals and for possible neutralization of oil installations."¹⁹ This last task resulted from stubborn Navy planners' insistence on preserving some means of denying Middle Eastern oil to the enemy, even if it meant the destruction of the oilfields.

The most pronounced difference between the plans were that one, code named "Half-moon" and approved by the JCS for planning purposes in May 1948, called for the securing of a base in the Cairo-Suez region that could be used initially for the strategic air offensive and then as a base for operations to regain Persian Gulf oil; while the second, code named "Frolic," called for the building of a strategic airbase near Karachi, Pakistan, and a major operating base in Casablanca, Morocco. Based on the assumption that the Mediterranean LOC would be lost to the United States, "Frolic" placed what many Navy strategists believed was undue confidence in

the power of the atomic air offensive to destroy Russia's will and capability to make war. It also left the attempt to regain Middle East oil resources hanging until some time toward the end of the second year of war. Because of "Frolic's" implied abandonment of the Mediterranean and the political and logistics problems associated with the proposed Karachi base, that plan was never approved by the JCS. Select portions of it were included in later planning, however, as the Fiscal Year 1950 budget cuts made their impact on U.S. strategy.²⁰

Despite strong Navy opposition to "Frolic" in the JCS and even stronger concern over the potential loss of Middle Eastern oil, American naval officers' planning became more and more restricted as the mood of crisis deepened in the face of realistic appraisals of Russian military capabilities. Adm. Louis E. Denfeld, the Chief of Naval Operations; Adm. Richard Conolly, the CINCNELM; Rear Adm. W.F. Boone, the Assistant CNO for strategic plans; and Capt. Arleigh A. Burke, a member of the Navy's General Board who had prepared an extensive analysis of the Navy's part in national security in the spring of 1948; all gave due thought to the problems involved, and all advocated at least the continuation of the plan to dispatch Marines to Bahrein in the event of war. Boone went even farther and declared that the denial of Persian Gulf oil to the Russians was an "essential" strategic requirement, along with keeping the Mediterranean sea routes accessible to the United States, while Burke and Conolly recommended that the United States avoid antagonizing the Arabs by intervening in what they considered to be their national affairs, because the cooperation of those states was the key to both wartime and peacetime defense of the area.²¹ Unfortunately, all the planning recommendations in the world could change neither the strategic balance as it

then existed nor the political, public, and—outside the Navy—military conviction that a nuclear armed strategic air force was the primary solution to the Nation's military problems.

Thus it was that in the fall of 1948, when the armed services faced the question of how best to adapt American war plans to the fiercely contested but unmovable Fiscal 1950 defense budget ceiling of \$14.4 billion set by President Truman, all the discussions over options for preserving U.S. wartime control of Middle Eastern oil became moot. Only the budget of \$21.4 billion proposed by the Joint Chiefs would have allowed for the development of war plans resembling the "Halfmoon" or "Frolic" concepts, while a proposed compromise budget of \$16.9 billion only provided for the defense of the Mediterranean as far east as Tunisia. The strategic concept for the \$14.4 billion budget specified abandonment of the entire Mediterranean for all practical purposes, despite the pleas of naval strategists that aircraft carrier operations in the area were both feasible and essential. It left the defense of the Cairo-Suez area—which was still contemplated for use as a strategic airbase—to the British (whose withdrawal to Khartoum was provided for) and tied prospects for eventual offensive operations in Europe and the Mediterranean once the Russian advance had been stabilized to the building of a major operating base at Casablanca. The largest share of that budget was allocated to the Air Force, whose plan for a nuclear air offensive against Soviet cities was now seen as the key to victory.²² From December 1948 on, when the budget levels were finalized, naval officers in Washington increasingly feared, as a result of these developments, that their service was losing its influence on the shaping of national military strategy. It was these strategic concerns, rather than the alleged super-carrier versus B-36 bomber rivalry, which fueled the so-called Admirals' Revolt" in congressional hearings in October 1949.²³

Revolt" in congressional hearings in October 1949.²³

The war plan and budget struggles in Washington had a delayed impact on U.S. naval operations in the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf. Although the possibility of an American military commitment to retaining control of Middle Eastern oil in a future war was fast fading, efforts in support of such a commitment were nevertheless underway. From 19 July to 12 August 1948, the small seaplane tender *Greenwich Bay* cruised the Persian Gulf testing the suitability of that class of vessel for service in the area as a station ship. Five days after she departed, Vice Adm. D.B. Duncan's Task Force 128 arrived for a 2-week cruise, during which specially equipped photo planes from the escort carrier *Siboney* flew mapping missions over the region. In September 1948, a group of naval officers made an inspection tour of the oilfields and port facilities in the Indian Ocean and in their report recommended consideration of Trincomalee, Ceylon, as a base to support future naval operations in the Persian Gulf. Finally, on 1 October 1948, Task Force 126, U.S. Naval Forces, Persian Gulf, was reorganized into three separate units to take care of shore-based administration, tanker operations, and the four-ship Hydrographic Survey Group 1 that mapped the area from October 1948 to April 1949. Additional visits were made by other Navy ships as well, and beginning in May 1949, a small seaplane tender was always on station in the gulf as flagship of Task Force 126.²⁴

Although the operations described above were significant in that they established a permanent American naval presence in the Persian Gulf, it was the plan for airlifting a Marine battalion landing team to Bahrein to evacuate civilians and, if necessary, to blow up the oilfields in the event of hostilities that served to make such operations

60 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

strategically meaningful. That plan, which was first conceived in JWPC 485/1 in 1946, had grown in sophistication since the first tentative assignments of forces were made in 1947. By November 1948, an itemized 6th Task Fleet operation plan was available, detailing how the scattered units of the "Marine Battalion, Mediterranean" were to disembark from their ships, what airfields they were to fly from, and the nature and amount of their logistic support. Along with this additional sophistication in operational planning, the neutralization and evacuation mission was expanded to include protecting the area against sabotage and U.S. nationals against the native, "in the event that U.S.-Arab relations deteriorate."²⁵

On 24 January 1950, the Joint Chiefs of Staff modified the current emergency war plan, code named "Off-tackle," and other emergency plans to eliminate the deployment of the Marine battalion landing team to the Persian Gulf in the event of war. Those troops were instead to remain available for use in the Mediterranean.²⁶ No reasons were given for such a move, but it seems likely that the combination of a further tightened Fiscal 1951 defense budget, the growing influence of Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on U.S. strategic plans, and the threatening existence of the Soviet atomic bomb made such a move inevitable. The emerging U.S. strategic attitude toward the Middle East and its oilfields is best illustrated by the original JCS recommendations for the U.S. position in the October 1950 Politico-Military Conversations with the British. The Joint Chiefs pointed out that:

... in their opinion, if the Western Powers lose Western Europe [which had been entirely written off in earlier war plans] they lose the war. On the other hand, the loss of the Middle East in the early stages of a global war would

not, in itself, be fatal, although the recapture of the Middle East would be essential for victory. The strategic defense contemplated for the Far and Middle East indicates that those areas are, for planning purposes, now considered to be in a lower category than Western Europe.²⁷

Succeeding years and a larger defense budget served to modify that attitude, as the 1951-1952 Middle East defense proposals and the Baghdad Pact indicate,²⁸ but the growth of Arab nationalism, the intense hostilities generated by the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the changing nature of the peacetime energy needs of the United States ensured that the January 1950 JCS decision would ring down the curtain on a fascinating and rather desperate period in the history of U.S. foreign policy.

These developments have a twofold historical significance. The first, and most obvious, is the apparent parallel between the late 1940's and the present day in terms of strategic concerns about inadequate oil reserves. The operations plan for the occupation of Bahrein, the pattern of U.S. naval activity in the Persian Gulf, and the search for military options in the area, including consideration of a possible base in the Indian Ocean, all have a familiar ring, a reminder that basic strategic problems will inevitably continue to emerge until some solution is found. However, it is hard to visualize the solution to this problem: the U.S. military, and increasingly the entire economy of the nation, finds itself dependent on an energy commodity which we do not, and cannot expect to, fully control in adequate supply, given skyrocketing demands and the volatile political situation in the Third World in general and the Middle East in particular. This issue is clearly one of vital importance to the military planner, as well as to the general public. In more strictly historical terms, however, what is most significant about

OIL IN A FUTURE WAR 61

American naval officers' unsuccessful attempts in the late 1940's to institute plans which would ensure the United States access to Middle Eastern oil in the event of war, is the light this failure sheds on the mood of American postwar military planning. It has long been popularly assumed that the United States after World War II was in a position of unrivaled strength militarily as a result of the development of the atomic bomb and that it was free to exercise its will in the world with relative impunity. In fact, as recently declassified documents reveal, the situation was very different, at least in the eyes of those charged with the Nation's defense. American military planners saw themselves confronted by a nearly unstoppable Russian war machine. They expected in the event of war that they would be initially forced to abandon virtually all of Western Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. The debates over planning between 1947 and 1950 seem to have focused primarily on the question where it would be best to establish a toehold which could be used to neutralize, and eventually roll back, the Russian advance. Predictions of U.S. capabilities became increasingly gloomy, until under pressure of the budget cuts it became

clear that only a single such toehold could be established and that it would be designed, because of the growing influence of the Air Force with its strategic bombing capability, to meet Air Force rather than Navy requirements. The wider implications of this decision are of enormous impact but lie beyond the scope of this paper. The decision to abandon plans to defend Middle Eastern oil, however, clearly demonstrates the desperate, last-ditch nature of postwar planning, an image in striking contrast to that of the United States as an omnipotent military giant, able to achieve whatever goals it set for itself.

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



A graduate of The American University, David A. Rosenberg received his M.A. from the University of Chicago, where he is a doctoral candidate. He has been engaged in active research in the fields of

U.S. diplomatic, naval, military, and political history, and he has been a consultant on strategic weapons and force levels. He is now an Advanced Research Scholar of the Naval War College. In addition, he is writing a biography of Adm. Arleigh Burke.

NOTES

1. See in particular, "Thinking the Unthinkable," *Newsweek*, 7 October 1974; Robert W. Tucker, "American Force: The Missing Link in the Oil Crisis," *The Washington Post*, 5 January 1975, p. B1, ff; "Excursion in the Persian Gulf," *Time*, 10 February 1975, pp. 31-32; and "Miles Ignotus" (pseudonym), "Seizing Arab Oil," *Harper's Magazine*, March 1975, pp. 45-62.

2. The information in this paper was taken primarily from the following sources, all of which have been completely declassified within the past 2 years, or from which declassified notes have been taken: (1) The completely declassified Central Decimal Files (CDF) and Geographical Files (GF) for 1945-1947 and 1948-1950 of Record Group 218; the Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (hereafter cited as JCS) in the Modern Military Archives Branch of the National Archives; (2) The Records of Op-30, the Strategic Plans Division of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (hereafter cited as Op-30 Files) in the Naval History Division's Operational Archives (NHA) for the years 1946-1950 (records for 1946-1947 have been completely declassified); and (3) The post-1946 "Command Files" of the Operational Archives. With respect to the latter collection, I would like to thank Dr. Richard K. Smith, formerly of Lulejian and Associates, Inc., and Lt. Comdr. Philip A. Dur, USN, for making available to me some of their

62 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

3. Despite the great interest in the Middle East and the oil problem, there is a general dearth of scholarly work on the historical problems of American interest in this area. Besides James A. Field's pioneering background study, *America and the Mediterranean World, 1776-1882* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), the works that I found most useful in providing a backdrop for the 1945-1950 period were: John C. Campbell, *Defense of the Middle East, Problems of American Policy* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958); Herbert Feis, *Three International Episodes Seen From E.A.* (New York: Norton, 1966, original edition 1946); Raymond F. Mikesell and Hollis B. Chenery, *Arabian Oil, America's Stake in the Middle East* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949); Benjamin Schwadrin, *The Middle East, Oil, and the Great Powers*, 3d ed. (New York: Wiley, 1973); Robert W. Stockey, *America and the Arab States, An Uneasy Encounter* (New York: Wiley, 1975); and Mira Wilkins, *The Maturing of Multinational Enterprises, American Business Abroad from 1914 to 1970* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).

4. Mikesell and Chenery, pp. 58-67, 90-109, 181; and Wilkins, pp. 276-282.

5. JLPC 38/18/D, 23 October 1945; and JLPC 38/19, 8 November 1945, in CCS 092, U.S.S.R. (3-27-45), Section 2, GF, JCS. See also the other intelligence estimates in the JIS (Joint Intelligence Staff) 80 series in this section for the wider context of these studies. The JLPC study concluded that it was possible to move 300,000 men to the Persian Gulf within 6 months to slightly over 1 year, based on current capabilities.

6. Rear Adm. Cato D. Glover, Memorandum for the Chief of Naval Operations, Serial 0005P30 of 21 January 1947, Subject: Resume of "Pincher" Planning, in A16-3(5) War Plans, 1947, Op-30 Files, NHA.

7. *Ibid.*

8. JLPC 33/38, 24 October 1946, in CCS 463.7 (9-6-45) Section 2, CDF, JCS. It is interesting to note how estimates of both United States and Arabian reserves have changed; Saudi Arabian reserves are now considered to be as much as 460 billion barrels.

9. JCS 1741, 29 January 1947, in CCS 463.7 (9-6-45) Section 2, CDF, JCS, p. 3. See also Rear Adm. C.D. Glover, Memorandum for Fleet Admiral Nimitz, Serial 00012P30 of 4 February 1947, Subject: JCS 1741, Problem of Procurement of Oil in a Future War, in L, Logistics Group, 1947, Op-30 Files, NHA.

10. Letter, Forrestal to the President, 10 March 1947, in Alaska Folder, Box 112, President's Secretary's File, General File, Harry S. Truman Library. For Forrestal's views on the Palestine situation, see Walter Millis and Eugene Duffield, eds., *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York: Viking, 1951), pp. 263-367.

11. Capt. George W. Anderson, Memorandum for Chairman General Board, 8 May 1948, Subject: Some Notes on Our Strategic Position vis-a-vis Russia for Consideration of the General Board, in A16-3(R) Warfare (Reports), 1948, Op-30 Files, NHA. This paper was a duplicate of the one Anderson prepared for Admiral Sherman in 1947. It was described by Admiral Anderson in detail in an interview with the author, Washington, D.C., 5 September, 1974.

12. See JCS 1725/1 of 13 February 1947, Strategic Guidance for Industrial Mobilization Planning; JWPC 486/7 of 29 July 1947, Guidance for Mobilization Planning as Effected [sic] by the Use of Atomic Weapons; and JWPC 486/8 of 18 August 1947, Guidance for Mobilization Planning as Affected by Loss of the Mediterranean Line of Communications; all in CCS 004.04 (11-4-46) Section 3 and Bulky Package, CDF, JCS.

13. John C. Woelfel, "CINCNELM's First Visit to the Middle East," *Shipmate*, U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association, November 1973, pp. 23-24.

14. Fleet Adm. C.W. Nimitz, Chief of Naval Operations to Commanders in Chief Atlantic, Pacific, and Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean, 12 July 1947, in A16-3(5) War Plans, 1947, Op-30 Files, NHA. This memo was canceled by CNO Serial 00098P30 of 19 August 1947, but was cited in JCS 1844/13 below as assigning Bahrain operations to CINCPAC.

15. Capt. Thomas J. Kelly, USN to Adm. R.L. Conolly, USN, Op-40C-rb/aw of 16 September 1947, CINCNELM File, Command Files, NHA.

16. CINCNELM, Semi-Annual Summary of U.S. Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean, 1 October 1947-31 March 1948, 18 April 1948, in CINCNELM File, Command File, NHA. The movement of Marines to the Mediterranean was also reported in Harold B. Hinton, "Marines Going to Mediterranean to Reinforce 4 U.S. Warships," *The New York Times*, 4 January 1948, p. 1:3.

17. Rear Adm. H.M. Martin, Commander Carrier Division Five, to Chief of Naval Operations, no serial, no date, Subject: Observations, Saudi Arabia, in A8 Intelligence, 1948, Op-30 Files, NHA.

18. Accounts of the so-called Pentagon Talks of 1947 between the United States and Great Britain concerning the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East may be found in CCS 381, Eastern

Mediterranean and Middle East Area (11-19-47) Section 1, GF, JCS; and U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, Volume V, Near East and Africa* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1971), pp. 485-627. A copy of the Navy's CNO Op-Plan 1-47 of 17 December 1947 which concerned the landing of a Reinforced Marine Brigade or Reinforced Marine Division in Greece may be found in Folder "Miscellaneous, Navy Op-Plan 1-47," in the Op-30 Files, NHA. It should be noted that in JCS 1819 of 19 November 1947, British-United States Conversations, in the JCS file just cited, it was stated that the JCS preferred to note that the security of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East is of "critical importance" rather than "vital" to the future security of the United States.

19. JCS 1844/9 of 18 June 1948, Brief of an Alternative Short-Range Emergency War Plan (Short Title: Frolic/Grabber), p. 90, and JCS 1844/13 of 30 June 1948, Directives for the Implementation of Halfmoon/Fleetwood/Doublestar, p. 124, in CCS 381, U.S.S.R. (3-2-46) Section 17 and 18, respectively. Both of these plans were declassified on 9 December 1975.

20. *Ibid.* See also the Editorial Note quoting a JCS paper apparently to the National Security Council of 2 August 1948, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, Volume V, The Near East, South Asia, and Africa*, Part 1 (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1975), pp. 2-3. For Navy opposition to Frolic, see the Memoranda from the Chief of Naval Operations to the JCS, 11 August and 22 September 1948, in A16-3(5) War Plans, 1948; and Rear Adm. C.W. Styer, Memo to CNO, Serial 000126P30 of 10 April 1948, Subject: The Navy Position Regarding the Unilateral Request of the Air Force for a Seventy Group Program, in A21, Aviation, 1948, both in Op-30 Files, NHA.

21. Rear Adm. Walter F. Boone, Memorandum for Op-30, Subject: Statement of Major Problems, 22 November 1948, in A9, Reports and Statistics, 1948, Op-30 Files, NHA. See also Rear Adm. W.F. Boone, Assistant CNO, Strategic Plans, to CNO, Serial 000203P30 of 17 May 1948, Subject: Agenda for General Board Serial 315, "Study of Nature of Warfare Within the Next Ten Years, and Navy Contributions in Support of National Security," in A16-3 (R), Warfare-Reports, 1948, in *ibid.* On Conolly's views, see CINCNELM to General Board U.S. Navy, via CNO, Serial 00103 of 6 July 1948, Subject: Comments on Agenda for General Board Serial 315, Forwarding of, in same folder. On Burke's, see General Board 425 (Serial 315) of 25 June 1948, "National Security and Navy Contributions Thereto for the Next Ten Years, A Study by the General Board," in Personal File, Papers of Adm. Arleigh A. Burke, USN (Ret.), NHA, especially 48-51 of Enclosure (D). Denfeld's stands are exemplified in the two CNO memoranda to the JCS cited above.

22. The debates over the Fiscal Year 1950 Budget are best illustrated by JCS 1800/16 of 17 November 1948, Allocation of Forces and Funds for the FY 1950 Budget; and JCS 1800/18 of 15 November 1948, Allocation of Funds for the FY 1950 Budget, both in CCS 370 (8-18-45) Section 11, CDF, JCS; and the rest of the papers in that file for the period October-December 1948.

23. The long and complicated fight over the Navy's place in postwar strategy is described in detail in this writer's own study, prepared with Floyd D. Kennedy, "Naval Strategy in a Period of Change: Strategic Interaction, Interservice Rivalry, and the Development of a Nuclear Attack Capability, 1945-1951," prepared for Lulejian and Associates, Inc., Falls Church, Va., as Part I of U.S. Aircraft Carriers in a Strategic Role, of the History of the United States-U.S.S.R. Strategic Arms Competition. This is an unclassified study prepared for the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Plans and Policy in October 1975.

24. The information on ship movements was taken from the summary reports of CINCNELM to CNO for April to September 1948 (Serial 0195 of 14 October 1948) and for July 1948-July 1949 (Serial 0379 of 30 November 1949) in the CINCNELM Command File, NHA. The report on Trincomalee is to be found in enclosure B of Capt. G.R. Cooper, Comdr. F.B. Risser, and Comdr. H.C. DeLong, Memorandum of Ops-03 and 04, no serial, no date, Subject: Joint Report on Pertinent Observations during Recent Trip to Mediterranean-Middle East Area, in A8, Intelligence, 1948, in Op-30 Files, NHA.

25. U.S. Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean, Operation Plan, Com 6th-TaskFleet No. 8-48, Serial 000159 of 15 November 1948, in CINCNELM Command File, Post 1946, NHA.

26. Rear Adm. Stuart Ingersoll, Memorandum, by direction, CNO to CINCNELM, Serial 00087P30 of 30 January 1950, no subject, in A16-3, Warfare Operations; War Games, 1950, Op-30 Files, NHA. "Offtackle" was the war plan that was begun in April 1949 in response to the Fiscal 1950 budget cutbacks, and approved by the JCS in December. The basic concept of this plan may be found in JCS 1844/37 of 27 April 1949, Preparation of a Joint Outline Emergency War Plan, in CCS 381, U.S.S.R. (3-2-46), Section, 12, GF, JCS.

64 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

27. JCS 1887/6 of 24 October 1950, Report by the Joint Strategic Survey Committee on Politico-Military Conversations With the British Scheduled for 26 October, 117, in CCS 381, Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East Area (11-19-47) Section 2, GF, JCS. The final version of that quote was modified at the suggestion of Adm. Forrest Sherman, the Chief of Naval Operations, to read: "... in their opinion, the loss of Western Europe would represent a most serious blow to the Western powers . . ."

28. See Campbell, *The Defense of the Middle East*, chapters 4 and 5, for details.

