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# THESIS

DEFENDING NORWAY AND THE NORTHERN FLANK:  
ANALYSIS OF NATO'S STRATEGIC OPTIONS

by

Michael Kevin Mahon

December 1985

Thesis Advisor:

P. J. Parker

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Defending Norway and the Northern Flank:  
Analysis of NATO's Strategic Options

by

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Lieutenant, United States Navy  
B.S., United States Naval Academy, 1979

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

from the

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December 1985

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine an appropriate strategy for the defense of NATO's Northern Flank. If NATO fails to successfully defend this Flank, its vital North Atlantic SLOCs will be severely threatened and the rear of the Central Front will be exposed to attack from the sea. Norway's strategic location makes it the key to the defense of the region. Deterrence, the defense of Norway, and the protection of the Atlantic SLOCs are the fundamental goals of NATO in the region. Under current conditions NATO must meet two basic objectives to achieve these goals--the Alliance must provide reinforcements to Norway very early in a crisis and it must control the Norwegian Sea to maintain the war effort after the outbreak of hostilities. Four strategic options were considered in this analysis: expansion of deterrence, increased prepositioning, a defensive barrier, and forward defense. Of the four strategies, forward defense is recommended because it is the only strategy that adequately addresses the basic objectives.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

NATO's Northern Flank is a maritime flank that extends from the Elbe-Trave Canal in northern West Germany to the North Cape of Norway. It has recently received considerable attention in the U.S. Congress and the Western press because of the important role that it plays in the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy. Although its importance is clearly secondary to the Alliance's Central Front, there seems to be a consensus among strategic analysts that World War III may not be won on the Northern Flank, but it could very well be lost there.<sup>1</sup> This conclusion is based on the relatively free access to the North Atlantic and the rear of the Central Front that the Soviets would gain if they are able to successfully turn the Northern Flank. The relationship between the defense of the Northern Flank and the security of Western Europe was summed up quite succinctly by General Sir Walter Walker, former Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces, Northern Europe, in 1971:

If our northern flank should be turned, America's access to Europe would be exposed and thus her ability to aid us would be curtailed. NATO's northern flank is an area whose importance is growing . . . . Its defense is vital to the very survival of the West as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

The Northern Flank can be divided into two distinct geographic areas, each with its own unique defense

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<sup>1</sup>This conclusion is attributed to Robert C. Weinland in "War and Peace in the North: Some Political Implications of the Changing Military Situation in Northern Europe," paper presented to the "Conference on the Nordic Balance in Perspective: The Changing Military and Political Situation," University, Washington, D.C., 15-16 June 1978. It is endorsed by Marian K. Leighton, "The Soviet Threat to NATO's Northern Flank," Agenda Paper no. 10 (New York: National Strategy Information Center, 1979), p. 95.

<sup>2</sup>Leighton, p. 7.



considerations. For the purpose of this study, these two areas will be referred to as the southern and northern regions of the Northern Flank. Northern West Germany, Denmark, and southern Norway make up the southern region. The principal defense concerns in this region are preventing the Soviet capture of the Danish Straits and protecting the Central Front's Baltic Sea flank. The northern region includes central and northern Norway as well as the Norwegian controlled Svalbard Archipelago. In the northern region, NATO is particularly concerned with defending northern Norway and maintaining control of the Norwegian Sea.

Because of its central location between the two regions, the successful defense of Norway is considered the key to preventing a major setback or possibly even a catastrophe on the Northern Flank. At the outbreak of a major East-West war in Europe, the Soviets will undoubtedly invade northern Norway. Their purpose will be to capture Norwegian military facilities which will enable them to move the bases for their ships, submarines, and aircraft over 1,000 miles closer to NATO's Atlantic sea lines of communication (SLOCs). Additionally, from these bases in northern Norway the Soviets will be able to launch attacks to the south to capture the rest of Norway. Soviet control over southern Norway would greatly increase, the likelihood of their capture of the Danish Straits which would severely threaten the seaward flank of NATO's Central Front. Within the context of these threats, geo-strategic, historical, and political reasons dictate that the NATO Alliance must prevent the Soviet capture of northern Norway.

In a 1983 Proceedings article, U.S. Navy Secretary John F. Lehman asserted that geography was the most dominant principle of maritime power and that at present ". . .

geography overwhelmingly favors the Free World alliance."<sup>3</sup> On the Northern Flank geography is indeed a NATO advantage, but it is an advantage that must be defended. Norway occupies a commanding position in the northern region. Its location allows NATO to maintain close surveillance of Soviet military activities during peacetime and it also provides the Alliance with an opportunity to achieve defense-in-depth of the Flank during war. As a result of these factors,

NATO commanders in Europe have long believed that from the standpoint of Soviet strategy, Norway, on the alliances' extreme northern flank, is vital to success at sea. Some expect that the Soviet Union might move into the area before fighting began in Central Europe.

Norway has sovereignty over the Svalbard Archipelago which is located in the middle of a maritime gap that stretches from the northeast corner of Greenland to the North Cape of Norway.<sup>5</sup> The Greenland-Svalbard-North Cape gap controls the access from the Barents Sea and Arctic Ocean to the Norwegian Sea (see Figure 1.1). This gap together with the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) gap gives NATO ". . . considerable control over the exits from the northern Soviet ports."<sup>6</sup> Free movement through both of these gaps is considered absolutely essential for the Soviet Union's strategic and economic interests in the region.

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<sup>3</sup>John F. Lehman, "Nine Principles for the Future of American Maritime Power," Proceedings 110 (February 1984): 48.

<sup>4</sup>Drew Middleton, "Navy Sees Limit on Ability in Atlantic War," New York Times, 20 February 1980, p. A6.

<sup>5</sup>Svalbard is an Arctic archipelago that includes the Spitzbergen group of islands, Bear Island, and Hopen Island. It has been under Norwegian control since 1925. See Kirsten Amundsen, Norway, NATO and the Forgotten Soviet Challenge, Policy Papers in International Affairs, no. 14 (Berkeley: University of California, 1981), pp. 16-17.

<sup>6</sup>Christian Eliot, "Autumn Forge Exercise Ocean Safari Interview," NATO's Fifteen Nations 24 (October/November 1979): 66.



(Source: Leighton, p. xi.)

Figure 1.1 The Northern Flank.

As students of military history, especially World War II, the Soviets must recognize the value of Norway in any battle for the Atlantic. "Experience during World War II showed conclusively that the German forces occupying the long Norwegian coastline posed a constant threat to Allied

shipping operations in the Atlantic."<sup>7</sup> The airfields and deep fjords of northern Norway are excellent bases for ships, submarines, and aircraft conducting strikes against enemy naval forces in the Norwegian Sea and North Atlantic. Capture of Norway was a vital prerequisite to Germany's invasion of Russia and ". . . control of Norway by the Kremlin would be a prelude to applying decisive pressure on Germany, NATO's heartland."<sup>8</sup>

At the present time Norway's air and naval bases are a major NATO advantage. They pose a significant threat to the Soviet forces operating in the area, but they are also very vulnerable to capture by the Soviets. Based on the historical experience, the Soviets will surely attempt to capture northern Norway and its bases very early in a conflict with the West. If the Soviets are successful, these same bases will certainly be used against NATO in subsequent operations and their loss could very well insure Soviet success on the Northern Flank.

Beyond the geo-strategic and historical reasons for pursuing a strategy that provides for a credible defense of Norway, there is the basic commitment of the NATO Alliance to provide for the common defense. If NATO concedes the Norwegian Sea to the Soviets by establishing a maritime defensive barrier across the GIUK gap, this commitment will not be met by the Alliance because Norway will fall behind Soviet lines. Although some would argue that this is NATO's only alternative because of the balance of naval forces in the region, it is not a strategy that NATO can politically afford to pursue. With the Norwegian Sea under Soviet domination, NATO cannot resupply and reinforce Norway to the degree necessary to insure its defense. The Norwegians know this and so do the Soviets. What must be understood is that

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<sup>7</sup>Amundsen, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup>Leighton, p. 3.

Alliance cohesion is required both for going into war and for sustaining containment after war termination. If we forfeit the defense of any NATO ally, we give the Soviets a leverage point to start destroying the Alliance in detail.

Under current conditions control of the Norwegian Sea is necessary to insure the successful defense of Norway and more importantly, to protect NATO's North Atlantic SLOCs. If NATO is unable to protect its Atlantic lifelines because it cannot establish control of the Norwegian Sea, the Alliance's strategy for the defense of Western Europe loses its credibility and the situation on the Central Front becomes untenable. By maintaining a viable strategy and a credible capability to defend Norway the Alliance should be able to deter Soviet aggression on the Northern Flank. If deterrence fails somewhere else in the world and a major East-West war erupts, a strong defense posture in the northern region will permit the defense-in-depth of the Atlantic SLOCs.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the strategic situation on the Northern Flank with specific emphasis on the northern region. From this investigation, a set of goals and objectives will be determined to provide a basis of analysis for NATO's strategic options in the region. Several strategies will be analyzed with the intention of determining their applicability to the stated goals and objectives. In the end this process will lead to the formulation of a strategy that meets the objectives and achieves the goals.

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<sup>9</sup>Robert S. Wood and John T. Hanley, "The Maritime Role in the North Atlantic," to be published in *The U.S. Navy: View From the 1980's*, ed. James George (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, forthcoming, 1985) p. 8.

## II. SCENARIO

In the spring of 1988, the Soviet leadership determined that a significant shift in the 'correlation of forces' had taken place. Throughout the world the forces of socialism were slowly gaining an advantage over the West and the Soviet leaders believed that an opportunity existed for the Soviet Union to assert its power and achieve a major strategic breakthrough.

With Nicaragua firmly in the Soviet camp, its Marxist regime was free to export its revolution throughout Latin America and the U.S. was clearly on the defensive. American public opinion against any action in Central America that could possibly lead to military involvement eliminated the threat of U.S. intervention. The Soviet Union through Cuba had kept the Sandinistas in power during the mid-1980's and now the Sandinistas were paying their debt to their masters in Moscow.

Racial unrest in South Africa had blossomed into full-scale civil war with a Marxist faction in the vanguard of the anti-government movement. Realizing that the fall of the Pretoria government would jeopardize Western access to several strategic minerals, the Soviets through their Cuban proxies in Angola were openly extending their 'fraternal assistance' to the revolutionaries. Because of the racial nature of the civil war and the Reagan Administration's strong opposition to a violent overthrow of white rule, the U.S. could not intervene to support the Government nor could it back any of the revolutionaries. The U.S. was essentially powerless and the Soviets were taking advantage of American weakness in this very critical region.

Without much opposition from the West, the Soviet genocide campaign against the Afghan rebels was rapidly approaching its successful conclusion. The Soviet forces

in Afghanistan were in complete control of the cities and almost all of the countryside. Their 'fraternal assistance' was reduced to 50,000 troops (two motorized rifle divisions and several supporting units) which were deployed along the Pakistani border. The 'puppet' government in Kabul was leading the country toward socialism in accordance with the Soviet model and there was serious concern in Pakistan about the next Soviet move.

Despite these significant Soviet advances, the West was too preoccupied with domestic issues to recognize the growing seeds of confrontation. This preoccupation was at its peak in the United States where a liberal upsurge was gaining momentum and rapidly replacing the conservative consensus of the early 1980's. Continued unfavorable balance of trade deficits had forced the United States to take actions that caused friction with its trading partners and seriously strained its alliances. Efforts to eliminate Federal budget deficits and reduce the national debt finally forced domestic spending cuts and increased taxes. These actions sharply polarized the American electorate. The results of this polarization were obvious during the 1986 congressional elections when the Democrats regained control of the Senate and expanded their lead in the House.

As a result of the cuts in domestic spending, continuation of the Reagan Administration's defense build-up became politically impossible to support in Congress. By 1986 real growth in the defense budget had ceased and this trend continued until 1988. Because of this freeze in defense spending the modernization of the U.S. strategic nuclear deterrent force could not keep pace with the relentless Soviet building program. Conventional force improvements had to be substantially cut or extended well into the 1990's while the '600-Ship Navy' was complete, but critically short of manpower.

The stagnation of the defense budget in the United States made it extremely difficult for the U.S. to assume its leadership role in NATO and put pressure on its allies to continue meeting the Alliance goal of three percent real growth. NATO was slipping further behind the Warsaw Pact and with the existing economic conditions there was not much that could be done. The balance of military power, one of the most critical factors in the computation of the 'correlation of forces,' was overwhelmingly in favor of the Warsaw Pact.

As a result of NATO's conventional military weakness and Soviet strategic nuclear superiority, the world had been made safe for increased Soviet adventurism even at the risk of conventional war between the superpowers. The Soviets now turned their attention to what the British press once called "the Achilles Heel of NATO."<sup>10</sup>

In early June 1988, the Soviets made it clear to the Norwegian Government that they sought a permanent solution to the 'Grey Zone' dispute, revocation of the Svalbard Treaty, a Soviet-Norwegian condominium to rule Svalbard, and sovereignty over Bear Island.<sup>11</sup> The Norwegians put these issues before the World Court because it was apparent to them that any agreement reached in bilateral negotiations with the Soviet Union would be unfavorable to Norway and would require substantial concessions on their part. The Soviets responded with a refusal to abide by the ruling of the Court and announced extensive plans for resource exploration in the 'Grey Zone' and on Svalbard.

With tension in the region mounting, the Soviets began their annual naval exercise in the Norwegian, Barents, and North seas with units from the Northern and Baltic 'Red

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<sup>10</sup>The Sunday Times (London), 15 October 1978, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup>For detailed discussion of these issues see pp. 48-55 below.



Banner' Fleets. In addition to these fleets, the Soviets also exercised the ground and air forces of the Leningrad Military District in an obvious attempt to pressure the Norwegians. After two weeks of intensive operations at the end of July which included an amphibious assault against the Kola Peninsula coast, the Soviet ships returned to port for a brief period of reorganization and repair. On 3 August, they put to sea again for what appeared to be a second round of operations, but their true intentions became all too apparent during the early hours of 5 August.

At dawn on 5 August 1988, a regiment of the Soviet 63rd 'Kirkenes' Naval Infantry Brigade with the support of an air assault battalion captured the entire Svalbard Archipelago. Using the naval exercise as a cover for the invasion and Spetsnaz troops that were already on the main island of Spitzbergen, the Soviets were able to achieve complete surprise. Norway and NATO were presented with a most unpleasant fait accompli.

Immediately after the invasion, two Norwegian submarines that were on patrol in the Norwegian Sea penetrated the ASW (anti-submarine warfare) screen around the Soviet amphibious group. They sank two Soviet transports and a guided-missile destroyer (DDG). Unfortunately, only one of the submarines survived the Soviet counterattack. Norwegian F-16s and guided-missile patrol boats also struck Soviet warships that were supporting the invasion. Their attacks were devastating, but costly, with another Soviet DDG and three frigates (FF's) going to the bottom in exchange for two F-16s and two patrol boats. The Soviets were obviously surprised by the ferocity of the Norwegian attacks, but the sheer weight of their numbers eventually began to show. Masses of Soviet fighter and ground attack aircraft were slowly winning control of the skies above Svalbard, the Barents, and most of northern Norway.

By mid-afternoon on the 5th, the military forces of NATO had been placed on alert and the Norwegians began mobilizing their reserves. The Soviet response to this move again caught NATO and Norway by surprise. An hour after Norway started its mobilization, the Soviet 76th Airborne Division supported by two air assault regiments and Spetsnaz troops captured the northern Norwegian airfields at Banak, Andoya, and Bardufoss. While this was happening, two armored spearheads were driving toward the main Norwegian defense line in the Province of Troms. One formation, led by the 45th Motor Rifle Division, crossed the Norwegian border into Finmark. This force easily defeated the Norwegian defenders along the border and it continued down the only major road in the Province to join up with the airborne forces at Banak for the move further south. The other Soviet invasion force was led by the 54th Motor Rifle Division and it attacked through the 'Finnish wedge' to outflank the main Norwegian defenses along the Lyngen Fjord.<sup>12</sup> To make matters worse, the Soviets landed a large amphibious force composed of naval infantry brigades from the Northern and Baltic Fleets south of Troms, to surround the Norwegians.

As NATO leaders debated the appropriate response to the Soviet aggression, it became apparent that NATO lacked the conventional military capability to project its power into the region and forcibly remove the Soviets from northern Norway and Svalbard without risking escalation. Insuring the success of such an operation required forces that would threaten the Soviet homeland and these forces would surely prompt a decisive Soviet response. It was feared that the conflict would then spread to the Central Front and ultimately lead to World War III.

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<sup>12</sup>The Finnish wedge is the northwest corner of Finland which is sandwiched between Norway and Sweden.

Because of these considerations, NATO was faced with two basic alternatives: (1) military action--which could lead to World War III and the possible destruction of the civilized world as we know it; or (2) no military action--which could lead to further Soviet aggression, the disintegration of NATO, and the fall of Western Europe. The Soviets had decisively seized the initiative and NATO was fumbling for an appropriate response.

There are three key points that should be taken from this scenario. First and most important is the fact that World War III could very well start on the Northern Flank. It is a critical region for both sides and if presented with an opportunity the Soviets could conceivably use military force to gain a decisive advantage. The second point has to do with the correlation of forces. Without an obvious shift in correlation of forces away from the West, the Soviets will not risk war with NATO. If a shift does occur and the West appears weak enough, the Soviets may attempt to gain a strategic advantage in the region, even at the risk of war. The final point is that the Soviets have the standing forces, operational flexibility, and strategic access that they need to carry out a successful surprise attack against northern Norway.

A scenario like the one outlined above can be avoided if NATO maintains a credible deterrent on the Northern Flank. To make that deterrent credible, NATO must possess the capability to carry out a strategy that achieves the Alliance's most basic goals in the region--the defense of Norway and the protection of the North Atlantic SLOCs.

### III. NORWAY AND NATO VERSUS THE USSR

The Soviet military threat to Norway and the Northern Flank is composed of two distinct theaters of military operations (TVDs)--the Arctic TVD and the Northwestern TVD. It is expected that each of these TVDs will be activated during wartime. The Arctic TVD has a maritime orientation and its forces will come mainly from the Soviet Northern Fleet while the Northwestern TVD is land oriented and it will draw its forces from the Leningrad Military District.

#### A. THE NORWEGIAN DEFENSE POSTURE

The foundation on which Norwegian defense policy is built is membership in NATO. In the context of Norway's extremely small population, its exposed strategic location, and the overwhelming threat posed by the Soviet Union on its northeastern border, this reliance on NATO is easily understood. Over the years the Norwegians have also placed several restrictions on their participation in the Alliance. These restrictions were intended to reduce tension in the region, but they have also severely limited NATO's deterrent options on the Northern Flank. Because of these restrictions deterrence and the successful defense of Norway are contingent upon the Alliance's ability to deliver reinforcements during a conflict. Additionally, the Norwegians are only able to maintain small standing forces that are designed merely to buy time during an invasion. What results from this set of circumstances is a Norwegian defense system that is critically dependent on the rapid mobilization of its own reserves and the timely arrival of reinforcements from the rest of NATO.

## 1. Dependence on NATO

The Norwegians have long felt that membership in NATO and the defense guarantee from the United States that goes along with that membership are essential to their national security. Besides deterring a Soviet attack, "linkage to the security structure in Europe at large is a means to preserve a low military posture in Northern Europe."<sup>13</sup> This low military posture in Norway results in a situation where NATO reinforcements are necessary for a credible deterrent and defense.

Norway's dependence on NATO for reinforcement and resupply is best understood by looking at the numbers involved in this effort. During the initial stages of a war with the Soviet Union, NATO will provide over 30,000 men, 6,000 vehicles, nearly 200 aircraft, and over 20,000 tons of supplies. These figures are impressive, but what is even more important is that beyond these initial reinforcement requirements Norway will be extremely dependent on NATO for supplies. The civilian demand for supplies will exceed 2,000 tons per day which is in addition to an estimated 3,000 tons daily to maintain the war effort.<sup>14</sup> Most of these supplies will have to come by sea and Norway is almost totally dependent on other NATO navies (most notably the U.S. and British) to keep open its SLOCs.

Norwegian support for NATO membership cuts across political lines. Both the Labor and Conservative Parties have consistently demonstrated strong support for NATO membership, regardless of which party is in power. With the current government controlled by the Conservatives, this fact was made very clear during recent foreign policy

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<sup>13</sup>Johan J. Holst, "Norway's Search for Nordpolitik," Foreign Affairs, Fall 1981, p. 72.

<sup>14</sup>Roy Breivik, "Assuring the Security of Reinforcements to Norway," NATO's Fifteen Nations, special issue no. 2 (1982), pp. 66-67.

debates in the Norwegian Parliament (Storting) when the Labor Party spokesman ". . . stressed that the two pillars of Norway's defence and security policy are membership in NATO and the defence guarantee from the USA."<sup>15</sup>

Despite this bi-partisan support for NATO membership, there is a strong Norway-out-of-NATO movement that has gained considerable momentum in recent years. Issues like the neutron bomb, the dual-track (Pershing II and GLCM) deployment decision, prepositioning of the equipment for NATO reinforcements, and the nuclear freeze movement have caused considerable debate that has sharply polarized Norwegian public opinion over NATO membership. Regardless of the Alliance's decisions on these issues, Norway's vulnerability keeps support for NATO strong regardless of its policies and recent ". . . polls show that some 80 percent of the public continues to consider NATO membership essential for security."<sup>16</sup>

## 2. Restrictions on Norway's Participation in NATO

At the same time that Norway has fostered such strong ties to NATO, it has been forced to balance its actions against the defense concerns of its superpower neighbor. This process is referred to as 'Nordpolitik' and it is described by Johan J. Holst, State Secretary for the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as follows:

The overall objective of Norwegian foreign policy at present is to develop a framework for a stable order in the high North based on a balance of power maintained at the lowest possible level of military activity, and a pattern of cooperation which cuts across and reduces the saliency of the military competition.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>This statement was made despite Labor's outspoken opposition to NATO's decision to deploy the Pershing II and GLCM. John Berg, "The Army Hardest Hit in Norwegian Budget Plans," Jane's Defence Weekly, 16 June 1984, p. 984.

<sup>16</sup>Holst, p. 82.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

To make it clear to the Soviets that Norway's membership in NATO is in no way provocative, the Norwegians have placed several restrictions on their participation in the Alliance. These restrictions prohibit the basing of foreign troops in Norway; ban the deployment of nuclear weapons to Norway during peacetime; deny allied use of Norwegian airspace and territorial waters east of the 24th meridian; and prohibit NATO exercises in the Norwegian province of Finmark.<sup>18</sup> The cumulative effect of these restrictions has been to weaken NATO's deterrent capability on the Northern Flank and to make Norway's defense extremely dependent on reinforcements from the rest of NATO. Despite these restrictions ". . . the Soviets give the Norwegians no credit for their self-imposed restraint and seem not to believe that Norway is entitled to make defensive preparations of its own."<sup>19</sup>

At the beginning of 1951, Norwegian Minister of Defense, Jens Christian Hauge, precisely defined Norwegian policy concerning the basing of foreign troops in a speech to the Storting. What he made extremely clear was that the policy did not prevent Norway from making preparations for the arrival of NATO reinforcements, requesting those reinforcements in a crisis situation, allowing joint exercises in Norwegian territory, and allowing brief visits by NATO air and naval forces.<sup>20</sup> These guidelines have provided a framework for Norwegian defense planning up to the present.

The decision not to base foreign troops in Norway was made when NATO had unchallenged world-wide command of the seas. Control of the Norwegian Sea and the protection of NATO's Atlantic SLOCs are necessary for the adequate

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<sup>18</sup>Leighton, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup>Robert K. German, "Norway and the Bear: Soviet Coercive Diplomacy and Norwegian Security Policy," International Security 7 (Fall 1982): p. 70.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

reinforcement of Norway. Recognizing their dependence on NATO reinforcements, Norwegian leaders are quick to point out that

Counting on Allied reinforcements in a crisis situation is an essential element of Norwegian policy; Norwegian officials have also pointed out that it is a precondition for maintaining the base policy.<sup>21</sup>

When doubt was raised in the late 1970's whether the U.S. Navy could perform both the sea control and SLOC protection missions simultaneously, a reassessment of the situation became necessary.<sup>22</sup> As a result of Norwegian concern over the U.S. Navy's apparent limitations, an agreement was reached with the United States in 1981, to prestock the heavy equipment for a U.S. Marine Amphibious Brigade (MAB) in central Norway. This prestocking would allow the men of the brigade to be airlifted to Norway during a crisis situation which would greatly reduce the MAB's deployment time. The decision to place the brigade's equipment in central Norway instead of northern Norway, where the brigade would ultimately have to fight, was made to keep tension with the Soviet Union over the issue to a minimum. With the MAB's equipment in central Norway, the Norwegians were able to preposition the equipment for one of their brigades in the north. In the long run this decision should prove to significantly strengthen deterrence because

Moving U.S. Marines into Central Norway constitutes a more credible means of demonstrating resolve with the aim of deterring attack, and involves a smaller escalation potential than a direct move into North Norway. It might therefore lend itself to earlier implementation.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>22</sup>Middleton, p. A6.

<sup>23</sup>Holst, p. 72.



### 3. Norwegian Military Forces

With a population of only four million people, Norway's military forces are correspondingly small, but extremely professional and well organized. Despite the relatively small size of their military forces, the Norwegians appear to be confident in their defenses. Much of this confidence results from their 'total defense concept' which attempts to maximize the potential of their limited numbers by relying heavily on the mobilization of reserves. Major General Olav Breidlid, Inspector General of the Army, describes the concept as follows:

The defence of the country is the responsibility of every Norwegian. The total defence concept aims, in time of war, to achieve the largest possible military forces with the highest possible quality and, simultaneously, to obtain maximum support from the civilian infrastructure and resources in all fields.<sup>24</sup>

The total defense concept involves the standing forces (Army, Navy, and Air Force) which are made up mostly of conscripts, the Reserves, and the Home Guard as well as the civilian infrastructure that supports the military forces. What this system creates is a situation where "in proportion to population Norway has over four times as many men in active and reserve forces combined as the United States."<sup>25</sup> Table I provides a breakdown of the Norwegian armed forces and the total personnel available to each service.

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<sup>24</sup>Under this system every medically qualified male from the age of 19 to 45 must serve in the armed forces. Initially this service is with the standing forces as a conscript (twelve months in the army or fifteen months in the navy and air force) which is followed by service in the reserves. O. Breidlid, "The Norwegian Mobilisation System," NATO's Fifteen Nations, special issue no. 1 (1985), pp. 70-73.

<sup>25</sup>Richard C. Bowman, "Soviet Options on NATO's Northern Flank," Armed Forces Journal International, April 1984, p. 95.

TABLE I  
NORWEGIAN MILITARY MANPOWER

	<u>ACTIVE DUTY</u>	<u>RESERVES</u>	<u>HOME GUARD</u>
ARMY:	20,000	138,000	71,400
NAVY:	7,600*	22,400	6,000
AIR FORCE:	9,400	30,600	2,600
TOTALS:	37,000	201,000**	80,000

\* Includes 1,000 personnel in the Coastal Artillery.  
\*\* This total includes 10,000 Home Guard reserves.

The ground forces of Norway include a standing army with 20,000 troops on active duty and 138,000 personnel in reserve.<sup>26</sup> These forces are spread throughout the country to protect its most vital areas. Shortly after a mobilization order is issued, the Reserves will move to these areas by land, sea, and air.<sup>27</sup> During peacetime the Norwegians maintain one all-arms group in southern Norway which is composed of an infantry battalion, one tank company, field artillery, and anti-aircraft batteries. In addition to this group, there is also the 'Royal Guard' infantry battalion and several independent armored, infantry, and artillery units.<sup>28</sup>

Because of the Soviet threat to Norway, it is not surprising to find that most of the combat strength of the Army is assigned to the defense of northern Norway. The primary purpose of the standing forces in the north is to

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<sup>26</sup>International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 1985-1986 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1985), p. 55.

<sup>27</sup>There is only one north-south highway that goes all the way to the Soviet border while the only north-south railroad ends at Troms. This limited land transportation network puts a premium on reinforcement by air and sea.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

buy time for the mobilization of reserves which are necessary to stop a major Soviet invasion. Northern Norway's defenses begin in the province of Finmark which is on the border with the Soviet Union. As a result of this province's harsh climate, sparse population, and close proximity to the Soviet Union, its defenses are not very extensive. The forces assigned to defend the entire province include a reduced infantry battalion (500 men) at South Varanger garrison which is located outside the city of Kirkennes<sup>29</sup> and a reinforced battalion group (1,000 men) in Porsanger which is about 120-miles west of the border.<sup>30</sup> During wartime the Norwegians will mobilize a local brigade to hold the province's only military airfield at Banak as long as possible.<sup>31</sup> Based on these meager forces it appears that the Norwegians consider Finmark to be indefensible and that they expect to lose it very early in any conflict with the Soviets, but senior Norwegian military leaders insist ". . . that every inch of territory will be defended in time of war."<sup>32</sup>

The main Norwegian defense line is about 300-miles from the Soviet border along the Lyngen Fjord in the province of Troms.<sup>33</sup> The entire area is considered a natural fortress with steep mountains and deep fjords that greatly enhance the Norwegian defenses. Brigade North, a reinforced light infantry brigade from the standing army, 'is deployed

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<sup>29</sup>One company (150 men) from this battalion guards the border which has seven border stations and eight discrete observation posts. The heaviest weapons available to the battalion are TOW and Carl Gustav anti-tank weapons. Mark Daly, "Europe's Forgotten Frontier," Jane's Defence Weekly, 20 October 1984, p. 685.

<sup>30</sup>Amundsen, p. 6.

<sup>31</sup>Tomas Ries, "Defending the Far North," International Defense Review, no. 7 (1984), p. 879.

<sup>32</sup>Daly, p. 685.

<sup>33</sup>Erling Bjøl, Nordic Security, Adelphi Papers, no. 181 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1983), p. 24.

to defend this line. With 5,000 men assigned the Brigade has three infantry battalions, one tank company, one artillery battalion, and one anti-aircraft battery.<sup>34</sup> Table II summarizes the Norwegian ground forces assigned to the defense of northern Norway.

TABLE II  
NORWEGIAN GROUND FORCES ASSIGNED TO NORTHERN NORWAY

	<u>TROOPS</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>RESERVES</u>
BRIGADE NORTH:	5,000	TROMS	4 Brigades
1 BATTALION:	500	Varanger	None
1 BATTALION: (reinforced)	1,000	Porsanger	1 Brigade
TOTALS:	6,500		5 Brigades

Besides the defensive positions that are manned by Brigade North along the Lyngen Fjord, there are also fifteen heavily defended coastal artillery fortresses that guard against attack from the sea. These fortresses are manned by the Navy and they protect the entrances to the Lyngen and Ofot fjords which provide access to Tromso and the main naval base in northern Norway at Olavsern. This area is so well defended and so difficult to attack that "the local naval command is confident that it is virtually unassailable from the sea, though there is some concern about Spetsnaz operations."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>International Institute for Strategic Studies, p. 55.

<sup>35</sup>Spetsnaz is an acronym for Soviet special operations troops. Their missions include covert operations behind enemy lines, both before and after the outbreak of hostilities, to confuse and weaken enemy defenses. Ries, p. 879.

During a war Brigade North will be reinforced by two brigades that are mobilized locally and two brigades that are to be flown in from the south.<sup>36</sup> These brigades should be in place within two or three days after the start of mobilization. In addition to these four brigades and the brigade mobilized in Finmark, the Norwegians can mobilize at least seven more brigades and several independent infantry, cavalry, artillery, and special purpose units. Together all of these units give the Norwegian Army a total strength of at least fifteen brigades or five division equivalents (based on a standard division with three brigades).<sup>37</sup>

With emphasis on small vessels that are ideally suited to an anti-invasion role, the Norwegian Navy is tasked with defending Norway's long coastline and protecting its coastal SLOCs. To accomplish these missions the Navy has 7,600 personnel on active duty and 22,400 reserves.<sup>38</sup> Its main combat force consists of fourteen coastal submarines, 38 guided-missile patrol craft, five small frigates, and several support craft units.<sup>39</sup> These forces are not capable of challenging the Soviet Navy for control of the Norwegian Sea and in fact, they will be hard-pressed to conduct operations outside of Norwegian territorial waters.

The Norwegian Air Force plays a crucial role in the defense of Norway and NATO's Northern Flank. With 9,400 active duty personnel, 92 combat aircraft, and 30,000 reserves,<sup>40</sup> the Air Force is tasked with defending the

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<sup>36</sup>The equipment for one of these brigades has already been prepositioned in the area while the other brigade is in the process of prestocking its equipment. Ries, p. 879.

<sup>37</sup>A Norwegian brigade has about 5,000 troops and is normally employed as an independent unit. International Institute for Strategic Studies, p. 55.

<sup>38</sup>These totals include the personnel assigned to the coastal artillery. Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

airspace above Norway and protecting its airfields. Additionally, the Air Force must support the forces fighting on the ground and at sea. Because of Norway's dependence on reinforcement by air and sea, the Air Force's success at performing its missions will largely determine the outcome of the conflict on the Northern Flank. Norway's recent acquisition of 69 modern F-16 fighter/ground attack aircraft has dramatically improved the Air Force's capability to carry out its missions.<sup>41</sup> These aircraft along with sixteen less advanced F-5A fighters and seven P-3B maritime patrol aircraft are the only combat aircraft available to the Air Force.

In northern Norway the Air Force operates from bases at Bodo, Bardufoss, Andoya, and the previously mentioned base at Banak. Two squadrons of F-16s (Squadrons 331 and 334) are stationed at Bodo and they are often dispersed or deployed to the other bases in the region. There is also a squadron of P-3Bs stationed at Andoya.<sup>42</sup> These forces must control the airspace over northern Norway and they must challenge the Soviets over the adjacent seas. Their success is absolutely critical to the defense of Norway and the Northern Flank.

The small size of the standing forces makes the rapid and secure mobilization of the reserves for each service essential to Norway's defense. Norway is credited

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<sup>41</sup>The increased range capability of the F-16s over the Norwegian Air Force's old F-104s (an almost 100 percent increase) has accounted for a substantial rise in the number of Soviet aircraft that have been successfully intercepted and inspected near Norwegian territory. Prior to 1984 the annual average number of intercepts was 150, but in 1984 (the first full year of F-16 operations) the total was 471. John Berg, "F-16 Increases Norway's Interception Range," Jane's Defence Weekly, 26 January 1985, p. 133.

<sup>42</sup>The remaining fighter/ground attack aircraft are stationed at Rygg Air Force Base in south-eastern Norway and Oerland Air Force Base in central Norway in accordance with the following: Squadron 332 (F-16s), Rygg; Squadron 336 (all remaining F-5As), Rygg; and Squadron 338 (currently flying F-5As, but converting to F-16s), Oerland. Ibid.

with one of the fastest mobilization systems in NATO and the Home Guard is the internal security force that makes sure mobilization can take place.<sup>43</sup> With a total of 80,000 personnel, each military service has its own Home Guard contingent which secures its mobilization depots and key strategic areas immediately after the mobilization order.<sup>44</sup> To facilitate this process each member of the Home Guard keeps his personal weapon, ammunition, and combat equipment at home rather than at mobilization centers like the reserve units. There is considerable concern about the use of Soviet Spetsnaz troops against Norway and the Home Guard is the country's first line of defense against this threat.<sup>45</sup>

#### 4. NATO Reinforcements for Norway

"Allied reinforcements rather than forward stationing constitute the core of deterrence on NATO's northern flank."<sup>46</sup> There are several NATO units available for the reinforcement of Norway to support this deterrence policy, but these forces can only be deployed upon the request of the Norwegian government. This request can take place during a crisis or after the outbreak of hostilities, but the earlier that it occurs the better NATO's chances are of carrying out its reinforcement plans. It is for this

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<sup>43</sup>The elapsed time from the issuing of the mobilization order until a unit is ready to move to its assembly area is dependent on the when the order is given (time of day and season of the year) and the size of the unit. The approximate times for the various units are: Home Guard, 3-4 hours; a company size unit, 6-12 hours; a battalion size unit, 12-24 hours; a brigade size unit, 36 hours. For a complete description of the Norwegian mobilization system see Breidlid, pp. 70-72.

<sup>44</sup>Of the 80,000 personnel in the Home Guard, 72,100 are assigned to the Army; 5,400 to the Navy; and 2,500 to the Air Force. The Home Guard is organized into small sections, platoons or air defense batteries. International Institute for Strategic Studies, pp. 45-46.

<sup>45</sup>As a result of this concern about Soviet Spetsnaz troops, it was recently announced that the Norwegian police forces would receive training to help counter this threat. "Norwegian Anti-Spetsnaz Role," Jane's Defence Weekly, 2 November 1985, p. 959.

<sup>46</sup>Holst, p. 72.

reason that Norway's Minister of Defense, Anders C. Sjaastad, recently asserted that his country would request reinforcements early, ". . . even at the risk of increasing tension."<sup>47</sup>

The first units to arrive in Norway after the outbreak of hostilities (or upon the request of the Government) should be up to eight squadrons (96 aircraft) of fighter/ground attack aircraft.<sup>48</sup> These aircraft squadrons should be in place within 48 hours and their mission will be to assist the Norwegian Air Force in defending Norway's airspace and its major airfields. Because much of Norway's immediate reinforcement will be by air, these aircraft are extremely critical to the outcome of the battle.

With its heavy equipment and supplies stockpiled in central Norway, the U.S. Marine Amphibious Brigade is expected to be one of the first NATO reinforcement units to arrive in Norway. Additional reinforcements could possibly include the Allied Command Europe (ACE) Mobile Force and the United Kingdom/Netherlands Amphibious Force. Because of its mission and its capability to be rapidly deployed, it is highly probable that the ACE Mobile Force will be the first non-Norwegian NATO force in Norway.<sup>49</sup> The ACE Mobile Force is largely a deterrent force which lacks the staying-power to make a major contribution to the defense of Norway. Theoretically, it should be deployed to Norway before the outbreak of hostilities to signal NATO's resolve in the

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<sup>47</sup>Mark Daly, "Norway Will React Quickly Promises Defence Minister," Jane's Defence Weekly, 13 October 1984, p. 619.

<sup>48</sup>Ries, p. 880.

<sup>49</sup>Known as SACEUR's 'fire brigade', the Ace Mobile Force is a multi-national organization which was created to support NATO's flexible response doctrine. It has land and air contingents that are drawn from seven NATO nations. Canada, Britain, the Netherlands and the U.S. concentrate on the Northern Flank while Belgium, West Germany and Italy take care of the Southern Flank. See Charles Messenger, "The ACE Mobile Force," Jane's 1983-84 Military Review, ed. Ian V. Hogg (London: Jane's Publishing, 1983), pp. 21-31.



region.

On the other hand, NATO will depend heavily on the contribution of the UK/Netherlands Amphibious Force. Although its heavy equipment and war supplies are not prepositioned in Norway, it can be deployed to Norway during a crisis situation in a relatively short period of time. This short deployment time results from the close proximity of the countries involved and carefully prepared deployment plans.<sup>50</sup> The Force receives extensive training and it is fully equipped to fight in the harsh Norwegian environment, but there is growing concern that Norway will not be able to count on its services in the future. This concern stems from the debate in the British government over whether or not the Royal Navy should replace its current generation of amphibious assault ships which will be retired during the 1990s.<sup>51</sup> Amphibious assault ships are needed to deliver the Anglo/Dutch Marines to Norway during wartime and without a new generation of ships the Royal Navy will lack that capability.

Each of the above units has other taskings outside of Norway that might have higher priority and cause them to be sent elsewhere. The only earmarked ground combat unit is the Canadian Air-Sea Transportable (CAST) Brigade, but because its heavy equipment is not stockpiled in Norway the Brigade could take up to thirty days to arrive by sea.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>To reduce its deployment time even more, this force could be placed on ships and stationed off the coast of Norway ready to be inserted during a crisis situation. J. D. Ladd, "Marines General Calls for Urgent Ship Study," Jane's Defence Weekly, 4 February 1984, p. 141.

<sup>51</sup>This debate centers around the cost of replacing these ships and the cost-effectiveness of airborne forces. One side argues that the cost-effective solution is greater reliance on airlift and the other side insists that a sea-based amphibious force "is the best kind of fire extinguisher because of its flexibility, reliability, logistic simplicity and relative economy." Joseph Porter, "Will Heseltine Replace UK's Amphibious Fleet?," Jane's Defence Weekly, 28 September 1985, pp. 686-689.

<sup>52</sup>Ries, p. 879.

This Brigade is also trained and equipped for combat in Norway and when it finally arrives it will serve as a mechanized reserve force.<sup>53</sup>

After NATO's initial reinforcement of Norway (in the first 48 hours), the Alliance should be able to provide up to 168 additional aircraft and the balance of its ground reinforcements during the next one to three weeks.<sup>54</sup> If the decision is made to send in the additional aircraft reinforcements, the U.S. Marine Corps and the ACE Mobile Force (Air) will be providing up to ten squadrons of aircraft. Table III is a summary of the NATO reinforcements that are available for Norway.

TABLE III  
NATO REINFORCEMENTS FOR NORWAY

	<u>AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>GROUND FORCES</u>
FIRST 48 HOURS:	96 (8 Squadrons)	1-2 Brigades (possibly)
1-3 WEEKS:	168	4 Brigades (1 earmarked)
TOTALS:	264	4 Brigades (maximum)

If the Norwegians are able to mobilize their reserves and promptly deploy them to northern Norway, NATO should be able to provide the additional forces that are

<sup>53</sup>The CAST Brigade consists of three mechanized infantry battalions, one armored regiment, one self-propelled artillery regiment, one engineer regiment, a large helicopter squadron, and all the necessary support units. Its equipment, training, and organization emphasizes combat against a mechanized foe in harsh conditions like those found in northern Norway. Charles H. Belzile, "The Canadian Air-Sea Transportable Brigade Group," NATO's Sixteen Nations, special issue 1 (1985), pp. 20-24.

<sup>54</sup>Ries, p. 880.

needed to stop the Soviets. Counting Norwegian standing forces and their reserves as well as all of the available NATO reinforcements, the forces that could be committed to the defense of Norway total at least 19 brigades and 356 combat aircraft. General Richard C. Bowman (USAF, retired), the U.S. chairman of a bilateral U.S.-Norwegian group that studied the defense requirements of the Northern Flank, offers the following analysis of the reinforcement situation in northern Norway:

Ultimately . . . the defense of northern Norway depends on the rate of reinforcement on both sides. The terrain advantage lies with the Alliance, and this advantage can be maintained if NATO is successful in reinforcing at even half the rate achieved by the Soviets.<sup>55</sup>

TABLE IV  
COMBINED NATO/NORWEGIAN FORCES

	<u>AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>GROUND FORCES</u>
NORWAY:	92	15 Brigades
NATO:	264	4 Brigades
TOTAL:	356	19+ Brigades*
* At least 7 division equivalents (3 brigades per division)		

In addition to the forces actually committed in Norway, NATO has several other assets that could play a major role in the defense of the Northern Flank. First, American aircraft carrier battle groups operating in the Norwegian Sea could provide close air support for the NATO forces fighting on the ground. U.S. Air Force AWACS and air

<sup>55</sup>Bowman, p. 95.

defense fighters (F-4s and F-15s) flying from Iceland are other assets that are also available in the region. These aircraft will be relied upon heavily in the battle for the control of the airspace above Norway and the Norwegian Sea. Additionally, land-based maritime patrol aircraft (U.S. Navy P-3Cs) will also be flying from Iceland and they will make a major contribution to the ASW campaign in the Norwegian Sea.<sup>56</sup> Finally, long-range strike aircraft (TORNADOs and FB-111s) flying from Britain have the capability to conduct deep strikes against Soviet forces in Norway and on the Kola Peninsula. If employed against these targets, they could seriously disrupt the Soviet offensive by destroying follow-on forces and interdicting lines of communication.

#### B. THE SOVIET THREAT

There are three inter-related aspects of the Soviet threat to Norway that have very serious implications for the NATO Alliance. First and foremost is the overt military threat posed by the tremendous build-up of Soviet forces on the Kola Peninsula. With these forces alone the Soviets could conceivably control the seas down to the GIUK Gap, capture much of Norway, and severely threaten NATO's North Atlantic SLOC. This aspect of the threat is the most important because it creates the strategic circumstances that make the other aspects of the threat possible. Second, there are several areas of confrontation between the Norwegians and the Soviets that could erupt into a conflict that would draw NATO and the Warsaw Pact into a major war. This aspect of the threat obviously has the most serious implications for NATO. Finally, there is the Soviet effort to isolate Norway from NATO and the United States. The goal is to achieve a neutral Norway that is ideally similar to

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<sup>56</sup>T. Malcolm English, "USAF Iceland-Defending the Atlantic," Jane's Defence Weekly, 17 August 1985, pp. 321-322.

Finland. This aspect of the threat becomes credible when the Norwegians perceive that the NATO Alliance can no longer guarantee their defense because of the Soviet military capability in the region.

1. The Military Threat

Analysis of Soviet actions in the Northern Flank region reveals that the overall Soviet strategy is designed to neutralize Norway. Ideally, this would be done by peaceful means, but the Soviets have massed the forces in the region to accomplish this objective militarily, if it becomes necessary. It not surprising to find that the armed forces of the Soviet Union outnumber those forces that are available to defend Norway, but what is surprising to find out is that the Soviet forces on the Kola Peninsula and in the Leningrad Military District alone outnumber their Norwegian neighbors.

a. The Arctic TVD

During the 1970's, the West witnessed, the emergence of the Soviet Union as a true maritime power. While this was happening the size of the U.S. Navy was significantly reduced by the retirement (without replacement) of World War II vintage ships. Nowhere are the results of this shift in the naval balance more obvious than on the Northern Flank of NATO.

The Soviet Northern Fleet, with bases on the Kola Peninsula, possesses the largest force of submarines in the world. It will provide the bulk of the forces for the Arctic TVD during wartime and its 38 ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) represent its main striking force. In addition to the SSBNs, the Fleet has 142 other submarines, 80 major surface combatants, 132 minor combatants (including several amphibious assault ships), and 200 auxiliaries.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>U.S., Department of Defense, Soviet Military Power 1985, 1985, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1985), pp. 8-13.

The missions of the Northern Fleet include: strategic offensive strike, strategic defense (pro-SSBN and anti-SSBN operations), support of the Ground Forces, and SLOC interdiction (anti-SLOC and pro-SLOC).<sup>58</sup> Of the four missions, SLOC interdiction will probably be a low priority during the initial stages of a war with the West because of the importance of the first three missions. SLOC interdiction will take on greater significance if NATO forces on the Central Front are able to hold the Soviets, causing the war to drag on for a long period of time.

TABLE V  
SOVIET NAVAL FORCES ON THE NORTHERN FLANK

	<u>NORTHERN FLEET</u>	<u>BALTIC FLEET</u>
SUBMARINES:	180	33
MAJOR COMBATANTS:	80	43
MINOR COMBATANTS:	132	347
AUXILIARIES:	200	170
NAVAL AVIATION:	440	270
NAVAL INFANTRY:	1 Brigade	1 Brigade

In addition to its surface ships and submarines, the Northern Fleet also has 440 aircraft assigned to its Naval Aviation contingent.<sup>59</sup> These aircraft support the Fleet in each of its mission areas. Long-range bombers armed with cruise missiles, strike support aircraft, and ASW aircraft are all included in the Fleet's air arm. What is missing in the Northern Fleet is Backfire bombers--the most feared strike aircraft in the Soviet Naval Aviation inventory. About 100 bombers are stationed on the Kola

<sup>58</sup>U.S. Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Understanding Soviet Naval Developments, fifth edition, p. 13

<sup>59</sup>Soviet Military Power, p. 13.

Peninsula, but none of these bombers are Backfires. During recent naval exercises Backfires from the Baltic Fleet have routinely deployed to the Kola airfield at Olenegorsk and these deployments have caused considerable speculation concerning the wartime use of these aircraft.<sup>60</sup>

To conduct amphibious operations in the region, the Fleet has its own naval infantry brigade (the 63rd 'Kirkenes' Brigade) which is stationed on the Kola Peninsula at Pechenga. This brigade has received considerable attention in recent years because of its major quantitative and qualitative improvements. It has been expanded from a regiment of 1,800 men to its current strength of about 3,000. Its aging force of 30 tanks has been replaced by 50 modern tanks and 150 armored personnel carriers. The 45th Motor Rifle Division (which is also stationed near Pechenga) has been trained to support the Brigade during amphibious assaults. Additionally, Mi-24 Hind helicopters now provide fire support for the Brigade during exercises.<sup>61</sup> These increases in the Brigade's size, equipment, and firepower have recently been supplemented by six (possibly seven) Lebed class tank-carrying assault hovercraft which greatly enhance its mobility.<sup>62</sup> Hovercraft will give the Brigade the capability to carry out its missions despite the rough terrain and harsh weather conditions of northern Europe.

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<sup>60</sup>There is considerable debate over the wartime role of these Backfire bombers. Although the aircraft are stationed near Leningrad, they routinely deploy to the Kola Peninsula and participate in Northern Fleet exercises. There is little doubt that the Backfire is more suited to tactical employment with the Northern Fleet which raises speculation that these aircraft are based further south to comply with the spirit of the SALT II agreements. See Hugh Lucas, "Backfire Takes Part in USSR's Navy Exercise," Jane's Defence Weekly, 14 April 1984, p. 547, and Tomas Ries, "A New Strategy for the North-East Atlantic," International Defense Review, no. 12 (1984), pp. 1802-1803.

<sup>61</sup>Ries, p. 878.

<sup>62</sup>Roy McLeavy, "Soviet Hovercraft Based Near Norwegian Border," Jane's Defence Weekly, 12 May 1985, p.719.

It is believed that this emphasis on the Brigade's combat capability indicates a Soviet intention to conduct amphibious operations in the region during wartime. This intention is reflected in the observations of NATO officials concerning expected Soviet operations during a campaign against NATO's Northern Flank. An undisclosed British Navy source summed up this situation in a recent article in Jane's Defence Weekly:

If the Soviets are keen to take out the northern flank then they will need sea power to achieve that. It cannot be achieved overland.  
In order to take out north Norway and establish their forces there they would have to come by sea. If we wish to maintain Norway we also have got to maintain the Norwegian Sea.<sup>63</sup>

In addition to northern Norway, amphibious operations are also conceivable against Svalbard, Bear Island, Jan Mayen Island, Iceland, the Faroes, and the Shetlands. Because each of these islands is within the range of Soviet airpower and with the exception of Iceland, they are either lightly defended or not defended at all; the Soviets can conduct operations against them at their own pace. In the initial stages of a war, operations against these islands are not likely because Soviet forces would have to concentrate their efforts on Norway, but once the Soviets are able to establish bases in Norway, anything could happen.<sup>64</sup>

The Soviets could also employ the Baltic Fleet to achieve a double envelopment of the Scandinavian Peninsula. This fleet, though smaller than the Northern Fleet, has considerably more amphibious lift capacity,<sup>65</sup> and

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<sup>63</sup>Geoffrey Manners, "NATO Commanders Criticise 'Split' Proposal," Jane's Defence Weekly, 4 May 1985, p. 739.

<sup>64</sup>Peter Whiteley, "Navies and the Northern Flank," in Jane's 1981-1982 Naval Annual, ed. John Moore (New York: Jane's Publishing, 1981), pp. 107-108.

<sup>65</sup>John Moore, ed., Jane's Fighting Ships 1984-85 (London: Jane's Publishing, 1984), p. 497.



its own naval infantry brigade. Its 43 principal surface combatants, 347 minor combatants, 170 auxiliaries, 33 submarines, and 270 aircraft<sup>66</sup> give it more than enough firepower to capture the Danish Straits and join forces with the Northern Fleet. In recent exercises the two fleets have demonstrated the capability to isolate Scandinavia between their two pincers and extend their deployment area out to the GIUK gap.<sup>67</sup> Operations like these not only threaten Norway, but Britain, Denmark, Holland and Belgium. It is absolutely essential for NATO to pursue a strategy that prevents the Northern and Baltic Fleets from joining forces and conducting combined operations.

With the Northern Fleet homeported on the Kola Peninsula, it is easy to understand why Secretary Lehman calls the Peninsula "the most valuable piece of real estate on earth."<sup>68</sup> There is however, much more to his argument. In general, the Soviet Navy's access to the Atlantic Ocean is severely restricted by geography. Two of the three Soviet fleets that are located near the Atlantic, the Baltic Fleet and the Black Sea Fleet, must transit very narrow choke-points enroute to the Atlantic. During peacetime these choke-points are under NATO control and they will surely be closed to the Soviets during war. Movement of the Baltic Fleet is also limited by ice throughout most of the winter. The Northern Fleet, on the other hand, operates from the Kola Peninsula's warm water ports and has relatively free access to the Atlantic. This freedom of movement originally accounted for the concentration of over half of the Soviet SSBN force in the Northern Fleet.

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<sup>66</sup>Soviet Military Power, p. 13.

<sup>67</sup>Whiteley, p. 107.

<sup>68</sup>Michael Getler, "Lehman Sees Kola Peninsula as a Key to Soviet Naval Strategy," The Washington Post, 29 December 1982, p. A4.

Today, the Kola Peninsula's close proximity to the Arctic provides the Soviet Union with a safe haven for the Northern Fleet's Delta and Typhoon class SSBNs. These SSBNs are equipped with extremely long range ballistic missiles that allow them to operate from the waters of the Barents Sea and Arctic Ocean. Because these submarines comprise a large portion of the Soviet strategic nuclear reserve force, the Soviets are very interested in guarding their security. With operating areas in the marginal ice zones and even under the Arctic ice, the SSBNs are protected by layered defenses composed of attack submarines, surface ships, and aircraft. These areas are referred to as bastions and during wartime one of the first priorities of the Northern Fleet would be to deploy to these bastions to achieve defense-in-depth of their SSBNs.<sup>69</sup>

The Kola Peninsula also plays a key role in the Soviet strategic air defense system. There are 280 dedicated air defense aircraft that are stationed throughout the Arkhangelsk Air Defense District (ADD) which overlaps the Kola Peninsula. As a part of this ADD, the Kola has 120 of these aircraft assigned to its airfields. Fifty surface-to-air missile (SAM) complexes with over 200 missile launchers are also deployed on the Peninsula to protect key military facilities and to guard the aircraft access routes to the Russian heartland.<sup>70</sup> Soviet strategic air defenses are concentrated along the main air corridors into the Soviet

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<sup>69</sup>During wartime the U.S. Navy is planning to penetrate these bastions and attack Soviet SSBNs under the Arctic ice. Richard Halloran, "Navy Trains to Battle Soviet Submarines in Arctic", New York Times, 19 May 1983, p. A17. For a description of these bastions and the Navy's plans see Richard T. Ackley, "No Bastions for the Bear: Round 2", Proceedings 111 (April 1985): 42-47; Ian Bellany, "Sea Power and the Soviet Submarine Forces," Survival 24 (January/February 1982): 2-7; and David B. Rivkin, Jr., "No Bastions for the Bear," Proceedings 110 (April 1984): 36-43.

<sup>70</sup>International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 1985-1986 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1985), p. 26.

Union and the purpose of these defenses is to intercept American bombers and cruise missiles that are attacking the Soviet Union.<sup>71</sup> What makes the Peninsula so important to this system is that

It lies directly beneath the shortest flight path from the United States to the demographic and industrial heartland of the Soviet Union and its forward position makes it a valuable base . . . for air defense forces.<sup>72</sup>

Finally, the Soviets use the Kola Peninsula as an auxiliary basing area for some of their strategic bomber force. To perform their strategic missions against the United States, Soviet bombers have to fly over the Arctic enroute to their targets. The Kola provides a convenient forward basing area for these bombers. This need to forward base their bombers is especially true for the Backfire force because this aircraft must refuel in flight to complete a round-trip intercontinental mission.<sup>73</sup>

b. The Northwestern TVD

In peacetime the forces assigned to the Northwestern TVD are part of the the Leningrad Military District (LMD). The Ground Forces of the District are under the control of the Soviet 6th Army (stationed at Petrozavodsk). Besides the headquarters for the 6th Army, there are also two army corps headquarters located in the District (27th Corps at Arkhangelsk and 30th Corps at Vyborg).<sup>74</sup> These headquarters units will command the forces assigned to the Northwestern TVD which will probably be divided into two fronts. The latest unclassified sources

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<sup>71</sup>William J. Lewis, The Warsaw Pact: Arms Doctrine and Strategy (n.p.: McGraw-Hill Publications, 1982), p. 113.

<sup>72</sup>Ries, p. 874.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>John Berg, "Soviet Front-Level Threat to Northern Norway," Jane's Defence Weekly, 2 February 1985, p. 178.

indicate that the Soviets have nine motor rifle divisions, one airborne division, one artillery division, and an air assault brigade allocated to the 6th Army.<sup>75</sup>

On the Kola Peninsula the forces assigned to the 6th Army include the previously mentioned 45th Motor Rifle Division near the border at Pechenga and the 54th Motor Rifle Division in the Kandalaksha/Alakurtti area (see Figure 3.1). Both of these divisions are maintained in a high state of readiness and they are heavily reinforced with units that enhance their offensive capability. These divisions are positioned near the most likely invasion routes for northern Norway and therefore they are expected to form the spearheads of the Soviet invasion forces.<sup>76</sup>

The air assault brigade and the airborne division (the 76th) are the types of units that the Soviets will have to employ in northern Norway to defeat its defenders. The climate and terrain of northern Norway make air mobility critical to the advance of Soviet forces. There are also reports that the Soviets have two Spetsnaz brigades in the area.<sup>77</sup> These troops will undoubtedly be used to create confusion behind Norwegian lines and their capabilities have already been pointed out by Norwegian naval commanders who insist that these troops are the only real threat to their

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<sup>75</sup>International Institute for Strategic Studies, p. 26. A typical motor rifle division has 12,000 troops and 266 tanks while the airborne division has 7,000 troops. Lewis, pp. 31-43.

<sup>76</sup>The most likely invasion routes are directly through Finmark and across the most northern part of Finland (this area is known as the 'Finnish wedge' because it is wedged between Norway and the Soviet Union). An attack through Finmark would essentially be a frontal assault along the province's only road while an attack through the 'Finnish wedge' would be an attempt to outflank the Norwegian defenses in Troms. If the Soviets elect to attack through Finland they would gain a significant advantage because their forces could use roads that would take them to within 40 miles of the exposed flank of the Norwegian defense positions. John Berg, "Soviet Front-Level Threat to Northern Norway," pp. 178-179. See also Bowman, pp. 93-98.

<sup>77</sup>Daly, "Europe's Forgotten Frontier," p. 685.



(Source: Berg, "Soviet Front-Level Threat," p. 321.)

Figure 3.1 The Area of the Northwestern TVD.

coastal artillery fortresses. Together these special-purpose units should give the 6th Army's motor rifle divisions the necessary support that they need to carry a successful invasion.

To provide air support for the operations of the Ground Forces in the Leningrad Military District, there are approximately 550 combat aircraft. About 300 of these aircraft are helicopters that are assigned to Army Aviation and the remaining 250 aircraft are part of the District's

Air Force.<sup>78</sup> All of these assets are under the direct control of the ground commander and they will figure heavily in the success of any Soviet attack on Norway.

Of the 550 tactical aircraft in the Leningrad Military District during peacetime, 130 are actually stationed on the Kola Peninsula. This brings the total number of aircraft on the Peninsula to about 650 (this total includes Naval Aviation and Air Defense District aircraft) or the equivalent of almost seven American aircraft carriers. With this many aircraft on the Peninsula, one would think that there would be a shortage of bases, but there are over forty airfields on the Kola. What is even more staggering is that the aircraft actually stationed on the Kola Peninsula during peacetime only represent 50 percent of its capacity which means that the Soviets could very easily double the number of aircraft on the Kola during wartime.<sup>79</sup>

TABLE VI  
SOVIET AIRCRAFT IN THE LENINGRAD MILITARY DISTRICT

	TOTAL AIRCRAFT IN LMD	KOLA PENINSULA ONLY
ARKHANGELSK ADD:	280	120
NAVAL AVIATION:	440	400
REGIONAL AIR FORCES:	550	130
TOTALS:	1,270	650

<sup>78</sup>There are 145 fighter/ground attack aircraft, 30 reconnaissance, and 75 helicopters in the LMD's Air Force. International Institute for Strategic Studies, p. 26.

<sup>79</sup>Sixteen of these airfields are all-weather and can handle the largest Soviet aircraft, see Lewis, p. 294.

During wartime the remaining motor rifle divisions in the Leningrad Military District will be mobilized and moved into positions to support the forces already stationed on the Kola Peninsula. Together these forces will give the Northwestern TVD a total strength of at least ten divisions with 2,400 tanks, 2,100 artillery pieces, and 98 surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs).<sup>80</sup> Additional forces are available from outside of the District and it is estimated that the mobilization time for all of these forces would be one to two weeks.<sup>81</sup> What this means is that "while an attack 'out of the blue' remains unlikely, a strike with the limited objective of neutralizing northern Norway could be mounted in six or seven days."<sup>82</sup> Senior Norwegian military personnel estimate the Soviets could mount a successful attack on northern Norway with essentially the forces that they maintain during peacetime. They frankly state that with an operational objective of occupying northern Norway as rapidly as possible

Soviet forces would need from four to ten divisions, including one naval-infantry brigade, up to one airborne division, one or more air-assault regiments and army level support forces . . . as well as up to 130 fighter/ground attack aircraft.<sup>83</sup>

Table VII summarizes the forces available to both sides during the initial stages of such an attack.

## 2. Opportunities for Conflict

As previously stated the next aspect of the Soviet threat to Norway has the most serious implications for NATO. Because of Norway's close proximity to the Soviet Union, it is extremely vulnerable to Soviet attack. This

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<sup>80</sup>International Institute for Strategic Studies p. 26.

<sup>81</sup>Holst, p. 70.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 879.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., pp. 877-878.

TABLE VII

THE OVERALL BALANCE: NORWAY VS THE NORTH-WESTERN TVD

	<u>NORWAY</u>	<u>NORTH-WESTERN TVD</u>
DIVISIONS:	5*	10
TANKS:	100	2,400
ARTILLERY:	380	2,100
AIRCRAFT:	92	1,270**

\* 15 Brigades-three brigades per division

\*\* Includes all aircraft stationed in the Leningrad Military District.

vulnerability becomes critical when viewed in the context of several disputes that have dominated Soviet-Norwegian relations for a number of years. These disputes are similar to problems encountered by many neighboring countries, but they take on much greater significance because of the impact they could have on the possibility of conflict between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. If the Soviets choose to impose their will on the Norwegians and elect to resolve any of these disputes by exercising their vast military superiority, the ensuing conflict could drag NATO into a direct confrontation with the Soviet Union.

There are three major areas of disagreement between the Soviet Union and Norway: control of the Svalbard Archipelago (including the Spitzbergen group of islands, Bear Island, and Hopen Island), the exploitation of offshore resources (particularly fish and oil), and the continental shelf dividing line. Each of these disputes have strategic, economic, and political implications that could easily lead to a crisis, but so far both countries have demonstrated a willingness to negotiate and exercise restraint. The question is--How long will the Soviets accept the status quo?



a. Svalbard

Under the Svalbard Treaty of 1920, Norway has "full and absolute sovereignty" over the entire Svalbard Archipelago.<sup>84</sup> All 41 signatories to the Treaty have the right to mine, fish, and hunt on the Archipelago, but only the Soviet Union exercises that right. With permanent communities in the Spitzbergen mining towns of Barentsburg and Pyramiden (see Figure 3.2) totalling about 2,600 people, the Soviets out-number their Norwegian hosts by more than two to one.<sup>85</sup> Coal mining is the stated reason for the Soviet presence on Spitzbergen, but "it is worth noting that the coal extraction of the Russians is considerably less-400,000 tons yearly-than that of the Norwegians"<sup>86</sup>.

Despite the apparent economic reasons for the Soviet presence, there is little doubt that the real Soviet interest in these islands is strategic in nature. As the central pillar of the gap through which the Soviet Northern Fleet must pass to get to the North Atlantic, the geo-strategic significance of Svalbard is obvious. When considering its location in relation to the Soviet SSBN bastions in the Barents Sea, the Archipelago takes on even greater importance. Soviet recognition of the strategic importance of Svalbard can be linked to an attempt by the Soviet government to have the Svalbard Treaty revoked in 1944.<sup>87</sup> What the Soviets sought, and continue to seek up to the present, is the establishment of a Soviet-Norwegian condominium to administer Svalbard and sovereignty over Bear Island. The Norwegians were able to reject the Soviet

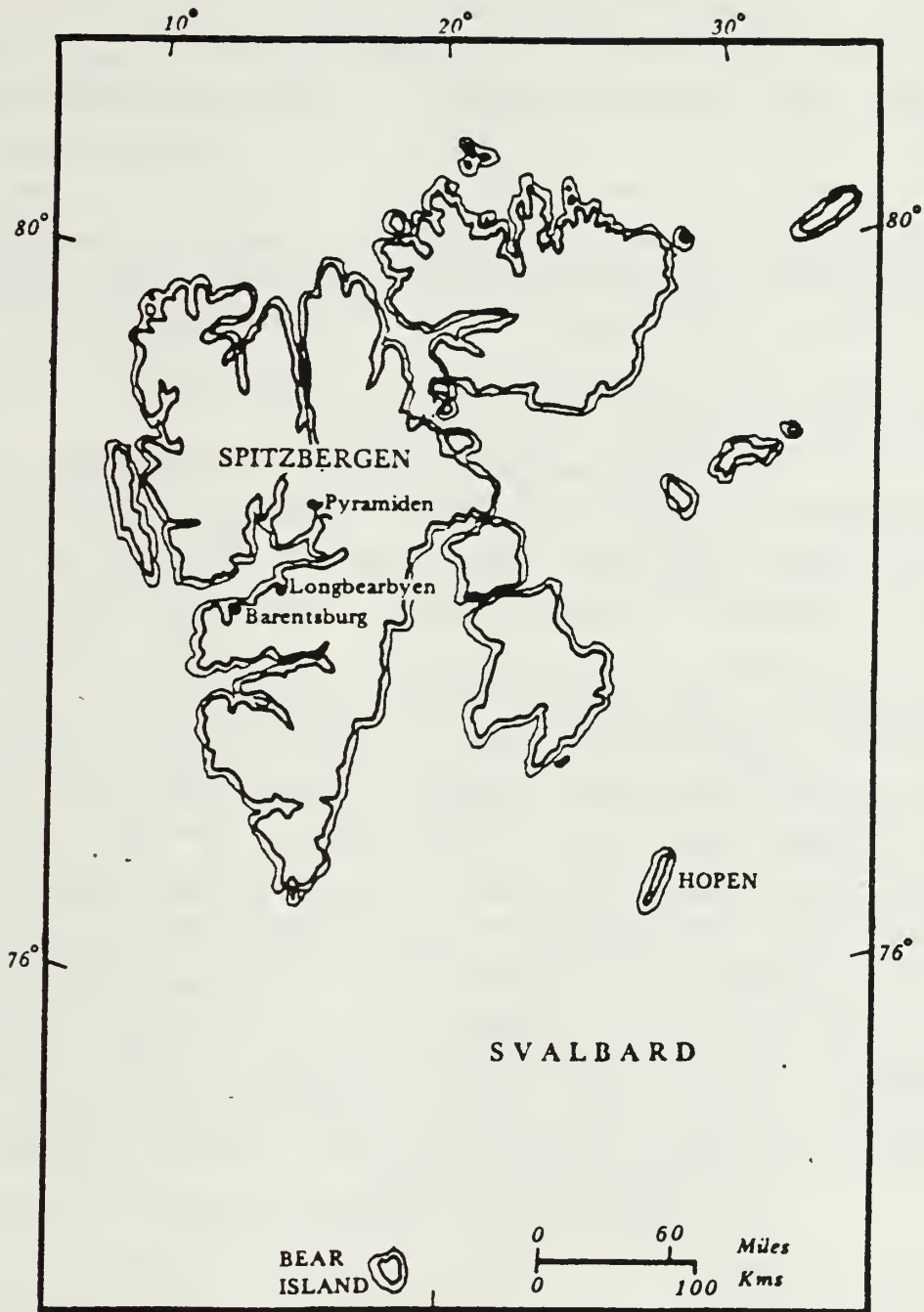
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<sup>84</sup>Amundsen, p. 12.

<sup>85</sup>There are approximately 1,200 Norwegians on Spitzbergen at Longyearbyen. The purpose of the community is coal mining and its annual production is about 450,000 tons. Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.



(Source: Amundsen, p. 17.)

Figure 3.2 Svalbard.

demands because of the U.S. policy of containment and are now protected by their membership in NATO.

The Svalbard Treaty also bans military installations and stipulates that the territories ". . . may never be used for military purposes."<sup>88</sup> The Norwegians strictly adhere to the provisions of the Treaty and as the sovereign power they are responsible for the laws that govern Svalbard. However, the record clearly shows that the Soviets have frequently and systematically violated both the provisions of the Treaty as well as Norwegian laws. These violations are interpreted as a strong Soviet challenge to Norwegian authority on the Islands.

The most notable example of the tension created by these violations occurred in 1978 when a Soviet Tu-126 radar plane (the same basic type of aircraft as the U.S. AWACS) crashed on Hopen Island. At that time Norwegian concerns about Soviet military related activities on Svalbard were on the rise. The Norwegians were particularly suspicious about the mission of the aircraft because they had recently uncovered a covert Soviet attempt to construct an airstrip and radar installation at Kapp Heer near Barentsburg. When the plane's flight recorder was recovered by the local Norwegians, Soviet commandos attempted to go ashore and forcibly take it back. A Norwegian gunboat had to prepare to fire on the Soviets to keep them from landing.<sup>89</sup> This leads one to wonder what the Norwegians would have done if the Soviets had not backed down.

b. Resource Competition

The Barents and Norwegian Seas are rich with resources that are important not only to Norway, but also to the Soviet Union. As a result of this situation, exploitation of these resources is a major source of controversy. Fish is a mainstay of the Nordic diet and it is an important source of protein for the Soviet people. Because of the

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Leighton, p. 17.

abundance of fish found in these seas, they are important fishing areas for both countries. Soviet fishing activities in these waters have been so extensive that they threaten Norwegian supplies.

It has been reported that the Barents and Norwegian Seas provide for more than 300,000 tons of the Soviet northern fisheries fleet's annual catch of something over one million tons.<sup>90</sup>

During the late 1970's, the Soviet threat to Norway's fish supply became so great that the Norwegians had to take action to protect their interests. The Norwegians extended their fisheries limit and they established a 200-mile economic zone in accordance with the Law of the Sea Conference in 1977.

In addition to the abundant supply of fish found in the Barents and Norwegian Seas, substantial oil and gas reserves have also been discovered on the continental shelf beneath these seas. "One estimate is that Barents Sea oil reserves may be up to twice as large as proven North Sea reserves."<sup>91</sup> These reserves represent a considerable find for the West, but they are located in a region that is particularly sensitive to the Soviets. Although the Soviets will undoubtedly explore the potential of the reserves in their part of the shelf, they have already expressed displeasure with the idea of international oil companies exploiting Norwegian reserves in the Barents.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>Kenneth A. Myers, North Atlantic Security: The Forgotten Flank?, The Washington Papers, vol. 4, no. 62 (Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1979), p. 46.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>Amundsen, p. 20.

c. The Grey Zone

The third major area of controversy between Norway and the Soviet Union is the location of the continental shelf dividing line. There is no agreement between the two parties over the appropriate method for determining the boundary and the area of disagreement (over 57,900 square miles) has become known as the Grey Zone. Figure 3.3 shows the difference between the two principles with the heavy line being the Median Line and the thin line being the Sector Line.

Negotiations between Norway and the Soviet Union to settle this dispute were started in the early 1970's, and a temporary agreement (the Grey Zone Agreement) was reached in 1977.<sup>93</sup> The Norwegians base their position in this dispute on the Continental Shelf Convention of 1958 which states that the 'Median Line Principle' will be used if the parties are unable to agree on the boundary of the shelf.<sup>94</sup> Even though the Soviets ratified the 1958 Convention, they refuse to accept its solution to the problem. They insist on the 'Sector Principle' which is based on a 1926 unilateral decree that claims complete Soviet sovereignty ". . . over all lands, islands, and ice within the sector line between Northern Russia and the North Pole."<sup>95</sup> The Norwegian position is obviously more legitimate, but the Grey Zone Agreement represents tacit approval of the Soviet position by Norway.

A Soviet military solution for any one of these disputes is highly unlikely at the present time because of the deterrent effect of Norway's membership in NATO, but

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<sup>93</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-15.

<sup>94</sup>"The technical definition of a median line: a line, every point of which is equidistant from the nearest points on the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial seas of each of two coastal states is measured." Myers, p. 49.

<sup>95</sup>Amundsen, p. 13.



(Source: Amundsen, p. 14.)

Figure 3.3 The Grey Zone.

this does not remove the threat. What these disputes really give Moscow are opportunities to exert pressure on the Norwegian government by manipulating the internal political forces that favor neutrality and avoidance of friction with the Soviet Union at all costs.

### 3. A Neutralized Norway

The Soviets appear to be pursuing a peacetime stratagem on the Northern Flank that is aimed at neutralizing Norway and maintaining or improving their already considerable military superiority in the region. Their deception plan is based on an all-out political offensive that is designed to exploit traditional Norwegian isolationist and anti-nuclear tendencies. With the military forces on the Kola Peninsula as a source of leverage; the Soviets are employing propaganda, agents of influence, espionage, and covert military operations against Norway to achieve what could be a decisive advantage in the region. Their immediate aim is to militarily isolate Norway from the United States and the rest of NATO. This sense of isolation allows the Soviets to exercise undue influence over Norwegian national security policy-making which in itself perpetuates the process. This strategy is consistent with the overall approach that the Soviets have followed in Scandinavia since the end of World War II.

. . . throughout the post-war years Moscow has sought to weaken Scandinavian ties with the West and to make of Northern Europe a sort of neutral, ideally pro-Soviet, extension of the buffer zone which is created by force in the Baltic Republics and Eastern Europe.<sup>96</sup>

The long-term goal of the Soviet stratagem is to get Norway out of NATO before the outbreak of a major East-West war. By achieving this goal the Soviets would reduce NATO's control over the movements of the Northern Fleet, improve the defensive posture of the Kola Peninsula, and greatly increase their threat to NATO's Northern Flank. The military build-up on the Kola Peninsula is the key element of the Soviet effort to achieve this goal. The forces assembled by Moscow on the Peninsula send a clear signal to Oslo

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<sup>96</sup>German, p. 55.

that accommodation with the Soviet Union is Norway's only course of action. To take this line of thinking to the extreme, the worst-case scenario for NATO would be

If the USSR's expanding naval power, increasingly offensive-oriented airpower, and ground forces in the region convince the Nordic countries that U.S. power 4,000 miles distant is no match for Soviet strength in place,<sup>97</sup> the war could be lost even before a shot is fired.

Realizing that Norway's withdrawal from NATO is not likely to happen in the very near future, the Soviets are pursuing the short-term goal of maintaining or improving their already considerable military advantage in the region. If war is 'forced' on the Soviets by the West before Norway has been neutralized, the Soviets would ideally like to take Norway out at minimal cost. To accomplish this objective the Soviets manipulate the 'Nordic Balance' to their own advantage. The Nordic Balance is a concept that implies maintenance of the the status quo in the region. What it really means in Scandinavia is that the Soviets will continue to show restraint concerning their relationship with Finland as long as the other Nordic members of NATO continue to restrict their participation in the Alliance. State Secretary Holst describes this situation as follows:

It is recognized in all Nordic capitals that decisions amounting to major deviations from the established pattern could alter the calculus in the other Nordic countries and the external pressures which influence that calculus.<sup>98</sup>

Military diplomacy is the term that best describes the Soviet efforts to exert pressure on the Norwegians. Through the military build-up on the Kola, the Soviets hope

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<sup>97</sup>Leighton, p. 95.

<sup>98</sup>Holst, p. 63.



to erode Norwegian political and military self-confidence. Along with this erosion of self-confidence, they also hope to erode Norway's confidence in NATO and its ability to provide assistance in a crisis situation. This erosion of confidence helps to isolate Norway from the West and it increases the influence that the Soviets have on Norwegian policy-making. If they are not challenged by Norway and NATO, the Soviets will continue

pursuing long-range objectives patiently and persistently; applying alternating waves of threat; cajoling, and banishment; supplementing diplomatic pressures with propaganda efforts to stimulate domestic pressures on governments; and using the unilateral concessions of neighbors as levers for obtaining still more concessions from them.<sup>9</sup>

The three following examples of Soviet interference in Norwegian affairs provide helpful insight into the Soviet peacetime offensive in Norway. In each case the Soviets manipulated the Nordic Balance to suit their propaganda needs and flagrantly employed military diplomacy to force the Norwegians to make concessions. Under these pressures the best that Norway and NATO could hope for was to break even.

a. A Nordic Nuclear Weapon Free Zone

Since the late 1950's the Soviet Union has pushed for a Nordic Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFZ) that would include all of the Scandinavian countries, but exclude the Soviet Union. Although the basic idea appeals to the Norwegians, each proposal for a Nordic NWFZ has been consistently rejected by Norway because the proposals fail to include the Soviets.

President Kekkonen of Finland assumed a leadership role in these efforts to achieve a Nordic NWFZ. His latest proposal in May 1978, had very serious implications

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

for Norway and NATO because it sought to extend the ban on nuclear weapons into wartime.<sup>100</sup> This would mean that NATO's response to a Soviet attack on Norway would be limited to conventional means and all deterrence in the region would be based solely on the threat of NATO reinforcements.

Realizing the advantage that acceptance of this proposal would give them, the Soviets expended considerable effort to sway Norwegian public opinion. The effort of their propaganda machine was so successful that by the spring of 1981 the ruling Labor Party had decided to endorse a Nordic NWFZ despite the negative impact it would have on NATO's ability to deter an attack on Norway. Surprisingly, the Labor government even indicated that it was prepared to extend the ban on nuclear weapons into wartime without restrictions on Soviet weapons.

At this time elections were being held in Norway and the Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev went so far as to hint that the Soviet Union might be prepared to accept some restrictions on its own nuclear weapons in the region if a NWFZ was accepted by the Nordic countries. All of these efforts were for naught because the Conservative Party won enough seats during the election to form a coalition government and effectively block any NWFZ proposal with a one vote majority.<sup>101</sup>

b. NATO Exercises in Norway

Since the early 1960's, the Soviets have consistently protested regular NATO exercises in northern Norway, ". . . calling them provocative, threatening, and-of course-violations of Norway's base policy."<sup>102</sup> These protests took

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<sup>100</sup>Leighton, p. 39-40.

<sup>101</sup>In 1982, the Norwegian nuclear disarmament movement collected 540,000 signatures for a Nordic NWFZ and the Labor Party came out with a strong nuclear freeze program. Nils P. Gleditsch, "The Freeze in Norway," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists 39 (November 1983): 32-34.

<sup>102</sup>German, p. 70.

on an added dimension in 1977, when Soviet leaders expressed considerable displeasure with NATO plans to include a 1,500 man West German contingent in upcoming ACE Mobile Force exercises in Northern Norway.<sup>103</sup> This deployment of German troops to Norway represented the continuation of a trend that had been established in the mid-1970's, but under Soviet pressure the Norwegian government reversed its position and vetoed the participation of the West German combat unit.<sup>104</sup>

c. The Prepositioning of NATO War Supplies

The debate over whether or not to preposition the heavy equipment for the U.S. MAB is another example of Soviet interference in Norwegian politics. Prepositioning the MAB's heavy equipment would reduce its deployment time from weeks to days. Successful implementation of this program would strengthen deterrence, improve Norway's defenses, and significantly reduce NATO transport requirements for Norway. Soviet propaganda again played a major role in the public debate. In September 1980, a poll was taken concerning this issue and an overwhelming majority (78 percent) of respondents believed that it was impossible to defend northern Norway without prestocking Allied equipment. Despite this consensus of opinion, only 58 percent of the population actually supported stockpiling NATO equipment in Norway.<sup>105</sup> As a result of Soviet influence, the equipment for the Brigade was stockpiled in central Norway instead of northern Norway where it was really needed.

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<sup>103</sup>Leighton, pp. 26-27.

<sup>104</sup>German, pp. 71-72.

<sup>105</sup>Amundsen, p. 43.

#### IV. FOR THE DEFENSE OF NORWAY: NATO'S STRATEGIC OPTIONS

The strategic imperative on NATO's Northern Flank is the defense of Norway. It is essential to recognize that Norway is the key to the Flank and that NATO must provide for its defense. If NATO fails to provide for a credible defense of Norway, it invites Soviet aggression in the northern region which could lead to World War III.

Based on the strategic situation as it is described in chapter 3, the fundamental goals of NATO on the Northern Flank are deterrence, the defense of Norway, and the protection of the North Atlantic SLOCs. The task of NATO's strategic planners is to determine the most effective means of achieving these goals. It is believed that the first step in this process should be to ascertain what tasks (or strategic objectives) are necessary to achieve these goals. After this determination of objectives, various strategic options can be evaluated relative to their specific accomplishment of these tasks. An objective analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each strategic option is critical to the process. Political, economic, and other pertinent constraints must also be considered, but it is important not to lose sight of the ultimate goals. In the end this process should lead to the formulation of a strategy that meets the objectives and achieves the goals.

##### A. FUNDAMENTAL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

There are two basic strategic objectives that must be addressed by any NATO strategy on the Northern Flank. First, the strategy must provide for sufficient reinforcements early enough in a crisis to deter Soviet aggression or to defeat an invasion if deterrence fails. Second, the strategy must provide a means of achieving control of the Norwegian Sea to maintain the war effort in Norway. If

these two objectives are met by a strategy, all three of the stated goals should be achieved by NATO in the region.

1. Adequate and Timely Reinforcement

Because of Norway's self-imposed restrictions on its participation in NATO, a credible Norwegian deterrent is contingent upon NATO's ability to provide reinforcements during a crisis situation. A NATO capability to reinforce Norway with sufficient forces early in a crisis not only supports deterrence, but it also enhances Norway's defense if deterrence fails.

To make deterrence work on the Northern Flank, it is important that non-Norwegian NATO troops are sent to Norway during the early stages of a crisis. This step should be taken so that it is clear to the Soviets that an attack on Norway is an attack on NATO. Even a small force with relatively limited firepower (ACE Mobile Force) would demonstrate NATO's resolve and strengthen deterrence. State Secretary Holst describes this relationship as follows:

Establishing a high probability of having to fight non-Norwegian forces at an early stage of an attack on Norway is considered particularly important from the point of view of raising the risk level.<sup>106</sup>

Because of the geography of Norway, the defense of northern Norway is the key to the defense of the rest of the country. The terrain in the north provides a natural barrier that more than makes up for the numerical inferiority of its defenders. Unfortunately, the situation changes further south in central Norway where the terrain advantage is essentially lost. If the Soviets are able to break-through Norwegian defenses in the north, there will be little left to prevent them from over-running the rest of the country. According to the assessment of General Bowman,

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<sup>106</sup>Holst, p. 70.

the Norwegians will be successful in the north if they are able to reinforce at half the Soviet rate. Initially, they should be able to achieve this rate of reinforcement, but without large numbers of NATO ground and air reinforcements this rate cannot be sustained by the Norwegians alone. "Norwegian capacity to hold out alone against a Soviet attack is estimated to be three weeks."<sup>107</sup>

This situation leads to the long war versus short war debate which is just as critical to the strategic situation on the Northern Flank as it is to the situation on the Central Front. What makes the two situations much different is that the forces in Norway would have a distinct advantage in a short war scenario. Norway's terrain and climate are such an advantage for its defenders that even under ideal weather conditions it will take the Soviets several days to arrive at the main Norwegian defense line in Troms. If the Norwegians have adequate warning and they are able to mobilize their reserves before the Soviets actually start their offensive, the Soviet advance on Troms could take weeks and it would be very costly in men and material.

There are three aspects of the reinforcement effort in Norway that are essential to the successful defense of the country. First, the Norwegians must control the airspace above northern Norway to allow for movement of their own reserves to the north. Without control of the air above northern Norway, reinforcement by air becomes doubtful. Second, NATO must provide sufficient aircraft reinforcements early enough in the campaign to make up for Norwegian losses and to maintain control of Norwegian airspace. These aircraft are necessary to keep Norwegian airfields operational and to protect their coastal SLOCs. The aircraft involved will also be critically needed to support Norwegian forces fighting on the ground and at sea.

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<sup>107</sup>Ries, "Defending the Far North," p. 879.

Finally, NATO ground reinforcements must arrive in adequate numbers to shift the balance on the ground in favor of the Alliance and to overcome initial Soviet gains. It is also critical that these reinforcements are equipped and trained to fight in Norway's harsh conditions so that they can make a real contribution to the defense effort.

## 2. Control of the Norwegian Sea

Control of the sea (or sea control) is the essential element of seapower and history tells us that it can only be decisively achieved by defeating the enemy's naval forces.<sup>108</sup> This approach to achieving control of the sea is endorsed by the U.S. Navy and it not only guides its operational planning, but also its procurement policies. A March 1982, Congressional Budget Office Report on the '600-Ship Navy' states the Navy's position on this issue as follows:

The Navy believes that the most efficient way to gain and maintain control of the seas during wartime would be to destroy hostile forces capable of challenging that control. This would include frontal assaults against Soviet naval forces and their supporting bases in Soviet home waters. Aircraft carrier battle groups would be used as the instrument of such offensive action.<sup>109</sup>

To achieve sea control in a given area of the world's oceans, a naval force must be capable of exercising control over its environment above, below, and on the surface of the sea. This multi-environment aspect of sea control is often ignored or misunderstood by people who are unfamiliar with naval strategy. It is for this reason that submarines are not by themselves considered to be sea control platforms because of their inability to control the airspace above the surface. On the other hand, the modern

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<sup>108</sup> Geoffrey Till, Maritime Strategy and the Nuclear Age (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), pp. 91-110.

<sup>109</sup> U.S., Congress, Congressional Budget Office, Building a 600-Ship Navy: Costs, Timing, and Alternative Approaches, by Peter J. Tarpgaard (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, March 1982) p. 6.

aircraft carrier with attack, fighter, and ASW aircraft embarked is considered the ideal sea control platform because of its ability to achieve control in all warfare environments. When the aircraft carrier is combined with a powerful array of surface and submarine escorts, it becomes the most potent sea control force in the world. Admiral James D. Watkins, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), who is himself a submariner, assesses the sea control capability of the aircraft carrier and its battle group as follows:

The carrier battle group - with its ability to assert control across the four dimensions of surface, subsurface, air and land warfare - is the sine qua non of modern sea power.<sup>110</sup>

What is important to recognize about sea control is that it is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve an ultimate objective. In the case of NATO and the Norwegian Sea, sea control is necessary to reinforce and resupply Norway during a war with the Soviet Union. Additionally, control of the Norwegian Sea will also severely limit Soviet access to the North Atlantic. If deterrence fails, the basic goals of NATO in the northern region are to defend Norway and the North Atlantic SLOCs. Control of the Norwegian Sea will enable the Alliance to achieve both of these goals. The view is that the battle for the control of the Norwegian Sea will largely determine the outcome of the battle for the Atlantic SLOCs. Admiral Wesley L. McDonald, the Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic (SACLANT), describes this relationship as follows:

... SACLANT stands on the fact that he is committed to reinforce and resupply Europe. That is our primary mission and one of the requirements, as I perceive it, is the reinforcement of Norway. As we do that we are

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<sup>110</sup>James D. Watkins, "Sea Power - the Carrier Battle Group," NATO's Sixteen Nations, special issue 1 (1984), p. 100.



going to have to project forces into the Norwegian Sea. I then find myself in a situation where the battle for the Norwegian Sea and the Battle for the Atlantic are inextricably entwined; there is no way of separating one from the other.<sup>111</sup>

The essence of this discussion about sea control is that "given Soviet priorities and NATO capabilities, sea control can be established more rapidly by going after the Soviet Fleet rather than awaiting their attack."<sup>112</sup> What this means in the Norwegian Sea is that the U.S. Navy, using its carrier battle groups and with the assistance of the maritime forces of its NATO Allies, would like to seek a decisive battle with the Soviet Northern Fleet. If the Navy is successful in this battle, it will move forward to contain the Northern Fleet in the Barents Sea and strike at its bases on the Kola Peninsula. When this process is complete NATO will have control of the Norwegian Sea and the Alliance's maritime forces will be free to support operations ashore.

#### B. STRATEGIC OPTIONS IN THE NORTHERN REGION

There are four basic strategic options available to NATO in the northern region of the Northern Flank. The first and most obvious option, is an expansion of NATO's means of deterrence. If Norway would revoke its self-imposed basing restrictions, both for foreign troops and nuclear weapons, NATO could employ the same deterrent options in Norway that it does on the Central Front. This approach appears to be the most logical solution to the problem, but it is also the least likely to be implemented because of political constraints.

NATO's second basic option is a strategy that is aimed at reducing the time involved in reinforcing Norway. This

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<sup>111</sup>Derek Wood, "Soviets Expand Maritime Air Power," Jane's Defence Weekly, 20 April 1985, p. 652.

<sup>112</sup>Wood and Hanley, p. 15.

approach recognizes the political constraints in Norway and seeks to address the problem within the framework outlined by Minister of Defense Hauge in 1951. The main thrust of this strategy is centered on increasing the amount of prepositioned war supplies in Norway which would significantly reduce the deployment time and sea lift requirements of NATO's reinforcements.

The third basic strategic alternative is a defensive strategy that accepts Soviet dominance of the Norwegian Sea and concentrates NATO's naval forces south of the GIUK gap to protect the North Atlantic SLOCs. A maritime barrier at the GIUK gap is the centerpiece of this strategy. The barrier, made up of maritime patrol aircraft, nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs), and land-based air defense aircraft, will be deployed to hold Soviet submarines and strike aircraft north of the Gap. NATO carrier battle groups will be employed south of the Gap as sea control forces to protect the SLOCs. Additional NATO submarines will carry out a sea denial campaign against the Soviets in the Norwegian Sea.

A forward defense that challenges the Soviet Northern Fleet in the Norwegian Sea is the final strategic option available to NATO. It is articulated in the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy and it is essentially the strategy that NATO has employed in the Northern Region since the beginning of the Alliance. Opponents of this strategy insist that it is no longer viable because the Alliance has lost its ability to project its maritime power into the Norwegian Sea.

#### 1. Elimination of Norwegian Basing Restrictions

The basic strategic problem for NATO on the Northern Flank is the maintenance of an effective deterrent in the region. Norway's basing restrictions effectively limit the range of NATO's deterrent options to the threat of reinforcement during a crisis and the possible use of nuclear

weapons during a major war. Currently, reinforcement and resupply of Norway depends on NATO's capability to control the Norwegian Sea and the massive Soviet military build-up on the Kola Peninsula threatens that capability. The Soviets realize that

NATO's commitment to defend Norway could be met only if the Norwegians themselves, in the first instance, requested Allied reinforcements to deter or repel an attack, and then only if the Allies were able to respond rapidly and effectively. Moscow's long-range efforts are directed toward assuring that neither of these conditions could be met.<sup>113</sup>

If the Norwegians were to remove their restrictions on the basing of foreign troops and/or nuclear weapons, then NATO's capability to deter Soviet aggression in the region would be greatly enhanced. In fact, revocation of the basing restrictions could eliminate the need for reinforcements completely while at the same time improving the overall Norwegian defense posture. With contingents of non-Norwegian troops and aircraft based in Norway along with their nuclear weapons, the need for immediate reinforcements would no longer exist. The campaign to establish control of the Norwegian Sea could be delayed until the submarine threat to American carrier battle groups is reduced. This delay would allow NATO maritime forces to concentrate on other problems, at least at the beginning of the war.

While the implementation of this strategy in Norway would greatly enhance deterrence and defense on the Northern Flank, internal Norwegian opposition to the plan makes it unrealistic as a strategic option. The depth of Norwegian opposition to the revocation of the restrictions cannot be over-emphasized. Public outcry against the prepositioning of NATO war supplies is a clear indication of where the Norwegians would stand on this issue. Even though the

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<sup>113</sup>German, p. 56.

Norwegian people recognize the need to improve their defenses, they clearly would not accept the basing of foreign troops to accomplish this improvement at the present time.

Public opposition to the basing of nuclear weapons in Norway could be expected to be even stronger than the opposition to the basing of foreign troops. It has already been pointed out that in 1982, the Norwegian Labor Party was ready to accept a Soviet proposal for a Nordic Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFZ) that includes all Scandinavian countries, but excludes the Soviet Union. They were even willing to extend the ban on nuclear weapons into a war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact without similar concessions from the Soviets. Although it is true that the Labor Party has not benefited from this position by regaining control of the Government, there is little consolation in the fact that the Conservative Party currently controls the Government. The Conservatives can only count on a narrow majority in the Storting on nuclear issues and they consistently trail Labor in the polls.<sup>114</sup>

Another crucial factor in this assessment is the role of Soviet Union influence in Norwegian decision-making. Unquestionably, the Soviets would interpret the revocation of the basing restrictions as an act of aggression. Since the imposition of the restrictions by the Norwegians ". . . the Soviets have consistently chosen to regard the base policy as a binding obligation."<sup>115</sup>

## 2. Increased Prepositioning of NATO War Supplies

Since agreeing to the prepositioning of the heavy equipment for the U.S. Marine Amphibious Brigade in 1981, considerable progress has been made to improve the stock-piles of prepositioned NATO equipment and war supplies.

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<sup>114</sup>Gleditsch, pp. 33-34.

<sup>115</sup>German, p. 62.

Unfortunately, the heavy equipment for the CAST Brigade, the only earmarked ground reinforcements for Norway, is not yet prepositioned although negotiations are underway.<sup>116</sup> Increasing these stockpiles in Norway could greatly improve NATO's deterrent posture in the region, but the political constraints cannot be ignored.

At first glance it appears that stockpiling of war supplies and heavy equipment could solve many of Norway's defensive problems. It allows the rapid and relatively secure deployment of NATO's reinforcements which greatly enhances deterrence. The need for strategic warning would be reduced and if deterrence fails, these forces could be in position at the outbreak of a war instead of in the middle of the North Atlantic on slow moving troop transports.

There are however, problems with a strategy that relies to heavily on the prepositioning of war supplies. The first major problem is the vulnerability of the stockpiled equipment to Soviet attack. It would be unrealistic to think that the Soviets would not attack the storage areas for the prepositioned equipment. Although these facilities are being constructed to reduce their vulnerability to air attack, there is still the threat to Spetsnaz initiated sabotage as well as airborne assault. These large storage areas are in themselves incentives for a Soviet surprise attack. If such an attack were successful, NATO reinforcements would lack the arms, equipment, and ammunition that they would need to make the necessary contribution to the defense of Norway.

A second problem with prepositioning of NATO war supplies in Norway is the threat posed by Soviet long-range strike assets (aircraft, missiles, and air-mobile troops) to the Norwegian terminals of the air bridge across the North Atlantic. If the Soviets are able to put Norway's airfields

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<sup>116</sup>Belzile, p. 24.

out of action at the beginning of a war, then NATO's reinforcements will have no place to land. Surely, the Soviets recognize the importance of Norway's airfields to NATO's reinforcement plans. Norway's airfields will undoubtedly be subjected to repeated attacks by the Soviets. These attacks could mean that NATO's reinforcements may never make it into Norway unless they are in position at the outbreak of hostilities.

Another related consideration is the Soviet capability to intercept the airliners that are flying the troops into Norway. The latest generation of Soviet fighter aircraft has the range capability to make such a threat possible. If the Soviets are able to capture airfields in northern Norway, NATO reinforcement by air would become a very risky undertaking. A successful Soviet airplane interdiction campaign could prove to be a reality and it would be very costly for NATO.

The vulnerability of the prepositioned equipment and the terminals of the airbridge are problems that can be reduced by hardening of the storage areas and improving the survivability of the airfields. If NATO receives adequate warning and its reinforcements are in position at the start of war, these vulnerabilities can be completely overcome. Even with reduced vulnerability and adequate warning, this strategy fails to directly address the issue of controlling the Norwegian Sea. As an independent strategy, it should not be endorsed as a solution to NATO's problems on the Northern Flank. Because of its capability to strengthen deterrence, it should be incorporated into any strategy that is employed by NATO in the region.

### 3. A Defensive Barrier at the GIUK Gap

In the late 1970's, when American naval power was at lowest point since the end of World War II, a defensive strategy based on a maritime barrier at the GIUK gap appeared to be NATO's only strategic alternative on the

Northern Flank. It was rationalized that NATO no longer had the naval forces that it needed to simultaneously control the Norwegian Sea and protect the North Atlantic SLOCs. The implications of this apparent lack of capability caused considerable controversy in the United States and NATO. The New York Times reported this change in strategy as follows:

The Navy, balancing present and future resources against its tasks in a global war with the Soviet Union, has concluded that two of its major missions, establishing lines of communication and supply across the Atlantic to Europe and achieving control in the Norwegian Sea area, must be carried out sequentially rather than simultaneously.<sup>117</sup>

The basic problem was that NATO simply lacked the necessary escorts (destroyers and frigates) to simultaneously defend convoys and control the Norwegian Sea. Unfortunately, this shortage of escorts still exists today and the extent of this shortage was revealed by Admiral Sir William Staveley, Commander-in-Chief Channel (CINCHAN), in 1984. Admiral Staveley disclosed that the Atlantic and Channel command areas were fifty percent short of escorts and were even worse off for mine counter-measure vessels.<sup>118</sup> The shortage of escorts coupled with the quantitative and qualitative improvements in the Soviet Navy during the 1970's alarmed Western strategic planners enough to cause a 'circle the wagons' mentality to become prevalent.

Soviet submarines and long-range strike aircraft are the main threats to the North Atlantic SLOCs. Of these threats the submarines are considered to be the most difficult problem for the Alliance simply because of the uncertain nature of ASW and the sheer numbers of Soviet

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<sup>117</sup>Drew Middleton, "Navy Sees Limit on Ability in Atlantic War," New York Times, 20 February 1980, p. A6.

<sup>118</sup>Robert Hutchinson and Antony Preston, "NATO Is 50% Short of Escorts, Says Admiral," Jane's Defence Weekly 14 January 1984, p. 9.

submarines that are available. Admiral McDonald frankly states that

If the Soviet Northern Fleet submarine force is not contained north of the GIUK gap then the battle for the Atlantic and ultimately the defense of Western Europe would become critical.<sup>119</sup>

The major components of this strategy are designed specifically to counter these threats through a layered defense of the SLOCs. In the first NATO defensive layer, SSNs would carry out a sea denial campaign in the Norwegian Sea. Their primary purpose would be to attrite the Northern Fleet, concentrating on its submarines, to reduce its offensive capability. The second layer would be the barrier at the GIUK gap. This barrier would be composed of SSNs, maritime patrol aircraft, and land-based air defense interceptors. Their main purpose would be the attrition of Soviet forces attempting to enter the North Atlantic. The forces employed along the barrier could be augmented by ASW minefields and carrier-based aircraft which would be operating in a supporting role. Carrier battle groups performing a sea control mission along the SLOCs would provide the next layer of defense. Their purpose would be to act as a mobile reserve force to counter any Soviet forces that penetrate the first two layers. The final defensive layer would be provided by the naval forces that are actually escorting the convoys. Many analysts consider the convoy and its escorts to be the most effective system for countering submarines.<sup>120</sup> The effectiveness of the ASW protection provided

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<sup>119</sup>Robert Hutchinson and Antony Preston, "Port Mining Threat Launches New Look at Reinforcement Plans," Jane's Defence Weekly, 14 January 1984, p. 5.

<sup>120</sup>This conclusion is derived from the experiences of World War I and II where the convoy was established as the best method of protecting merchant shipping. E. J. Grove, "The Convoy Debate," Naval Forces, no. 3 (1985), p. 41.



by the convoy's escorts could prove once again to be the decisive factor in the World War III version of the battle for the Atlantic.

Currently, the most senior American naval leaders reject a defensive strategy that calls for a maritime barrier at the GIUK gap with no insertion of U.S. aircraft-carrier battle groups into the Norwegian Sea. The Secretary of the Navy, John F. Lehman; the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Watkins; and the Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, Admiral McDonald; all have spoken out strongly against such a strategy.

There are three fundamental problems with a defensive maritime strategy on the Northern Flank. First and foremost among these problems is the fact that the strategy concedes the Norwegian Sea to the Soviets. Based on the forces that the Soviet Union has available in the region and recent Soviet exercises in the area, it is clear that the Soviet Northern Fleet will attempt to establish control of the Norwegian Sea very early in any conflict with NATO. If NATO's response to this Soviet move is a defensive barrier at the GIUK gap, the Norwegians will essentially find themselves behind Soviet lines and isolated from their allies. This isolation could lead to the fall of Norway and disaster for NATO. resistance. Admiral McDonald, (SACLANT), offered the following analysis of a GIUK gap barrier defense in Jane's Defence Weekly:

I just cannot build a barrier at the Greenland-Iceland-UK gap and not go into the Norwegian Sea. That allows the Soviets too much freedom in the Norwegian Sea and probably forecloses the fact that Norway is going to come under great pressure and may in fact collapse under that pressure. Therefore you lose the flanks, and you may, in fact, lose the battle for the Atlantic.<sup>1,2,1</sup>

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<sup>1,2,1</sup>Derek Wood, "Soviets Expand Maritime Air Power," Jane's Defence Weekly, 20 April 1985, p. 652.

Secretary Lehman, the Navy's leading advocate for an offensive strategy, shares Admiral McDonald's assessment of the Soviet threat in the Norwegian Sea and the impact that it could have on NATO's Atlantic SLOCs. He asserts that

Nato's answer to this threat cannot be simply to throw a passive barrier across the GIUK . . . Gap. We must be able to prevent the Soviets from gaining the initiative on the northern flank and from enabling their submarines to prey on Atlantic shipping.<sup>1 2 2</sup>

The second major problem with this defensive approach to the situation on the Northern Flank is that it makes no provision for the secure reinforcement and resupply of Norway after the outbreak of hostilities. In the context of Norway's strategic location, its vulnerable security posture, and the nature of the Soviet threat; it becomes readily apparent that the Alliance must possess a viable means of reinforcing Norway to guarantee its successful defense. Additionally, to maintain the war effort and civilian population in Norway large quantities of supplies will be needed from outside the country. Currently, the majority of Norway's reinforcements and almost all of its supplies must come by sea. This defensive strategy assumes that Norway could be supplied across the North Sea, but without control of the Norwegian Sea this may prove to be a much more difficult task than it appears.<sup>1 2 3</sup>

Any strategy that isolates Norway from its reinforcements and essential supplies by not challenging the Soviets for control of the Norwegian Sea, seals Norway's fate and forfeits the advantage of its strategic position. In recent testimony before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Sea Power and Force Projection, Secretary Lehman flatly

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<sup>1 2 2</sup>Lehman, p. 51.

<sup>1 2 3</sup>With the Northern Fleet in control of the Norwegian Sea and the Baltic Fleet pressuring the Danish Straits, the North Sea resupply effort seems impossible.

rejected a defensive strategy based on the GIUK gap for this reason. He emphasized that

It should be clear to everyone that if the NATO treaty means anything, it means that we have to protect and to hold Norway. The minimum reinforcement plans require both the Marines and the Ace mobile force to move by sea. They all have to go by ship, to Norway, after the conflict breaks out. If we allow the Norwegian Sea to be controlled by the Soviet Union, Norway is untenable.<sup>124</sup>

The final criticism of a defensive strategy is that it simply is not consistent with the lessons of naval history or the fundamentals of sound naval tactics. To many strategists, the defensive is considered the dominant tactical posture and while this may be true in land warfare, it does not apply to war at sea.

At sea, there has been no counterpart to prepared positions and the effects of terrain, nor anything corresponding to the rule-of-thumb, 3-to-1 attacker-to-defender ratio. There are no mountains nor swamps to guard flanks, no rivers to cross or defend, and no high ground. A fleet tactical commander keeps no force in reserve and all his energy is devoted to attacking the enemy effectively before the enemy can do so. At sea, offense dominates in a way foreign to ground commanders. When a tactical commander is not competitive, he had better stand clear because . . . he will have little to show for the loss of his force.<sup>125</sup>

In warfare at sea it is the force that seizes the initiative, even if it is numerically inferior, that more often prevails. The lessons of Salamis, Trafalgar, and Midway are still appropriate even in the age of the guided missile. When these lessons are viewed in the context of Soviet naval operations, exercises, and patterns of

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<sup>124</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Forces, Subcommittee on Sea Power and Force Projection, testimony 14 March 1984, pp. 3870-3871.

<sup>125</sup>Wayne P. Hughes, "On the Integration of Naval Tactics and Maritime Strategy," Paper prepared for the May Conference on "Maritime Strategy: Issues and Perspectives," Center for Naval Warfare Studies, U.S. Naval War College, 15-17 May 1985.

development, their message is only reinforced. It is quite clear that the Soviets would be perfectly happy with a NATO maritime strategy that called for a defensive barrier across the GIUK gap with no insertion of NATO naval forces into the Norwegian Sea. This factor alone should be incentive enough to dismiss a defensive strategy in the region.

On balance a defensive strategy based on a barrier at the GIUK gap falls far short of achieving the essential strategic objectives on the Northern Flank. First, it makes no provision for reinforcing and resupplying Norway after the start of a war. Second, this defensive strategy concedes the Norwegian Sea to the Soviets at the outset of the war which makes NATO's task of regaining control of the Norwegian Sea to reinforce and resupply much more difficult.

#### 4. Forward Defense: The Maritime Strategy

NATO's final strategic option on the Northern Flank is a forward defense strategy that is essentially offensive in nature. What makes this approach different than a barrier strategy at the GIUK gap is that it calls for engaging the enemy as far forward as possible. Instead of attempting to hold the Soviets north of the GIUK gap, this strategy envisions the Northern Fleet being bottled-up behind an offensive barrier at the Greenland-Svalbard-North Cape gap. This forward barrier would be supported by layered defenses along the access routes to the North Atlantic which would include an ASW barrier at the GIUK gap. According to Vice Admiral Henry C. Mustin, Commander NATO Striking Fleet Atlantic (COMSTRIKFLTANT), forward defense captures the essence of NATO's most basic strategy which is to defend the territorial integrity of its member nations. This basic NATO strategy is just as important on the Northern Flank as it is on the Central Front, he specifically states that

The maritime objectives of that strategy in the Northern Region are to protect Norway from amphibious assault, to

assist Norway within NATO to resist land and air attacks, to prevent the Soviets using Norwegian facilities against NATO and to contain the Soviet Northern Fleet at best by destroying it at sea.<sup>126</sup>

As was previously noted, the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy is an articulation of the forward defense concept and it is in fact the driving force behind NATO's strategy on the Northern Flank. The U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy recognizes the absolute necessity of controlling the Norwegian Sea. It calls for challenging the Soviets in the Norwegian Sea rather than conceding it without a fight. Aircraft carrier battle groups, submarines, and land-based aircraft will all contribute to the success of this effort. The current U.S. Navy leadership believes that such a synergistic effort will restore NATO's ability to control the Norwegian Sea and significantly reduce the Soviet capability to turn the Northern Flank.

A closer look at the Maritime Strategy reveals the key elements of forward defense on the Northern Flank. First, the Maritime Strategy is a deterrent strategy. It deters because it directly addresses the problems that will be encountered during a war with the Soviet Union and it provides a means of overcoming those problems. Its foundation is in war-fighting capability, but it is through war-fighting capability that it deters. Recognizing the need to control the Norwegian Sea, the Maritime Strategy calls for the eventual insertion of carrier battle groups to achieve that control. Carrier battle groups will not go charging into the Norwegian Sea at the outbreak of war, but they will be in a position to move in when Soviet anti-carrier forces have been reduced.

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<sup>126</sup>Mark Daly, "Protection of Convoy Routes a Key Objective for OCEAN SAFARI 85," Jane's Defence Weekly, 5 October 1985, p. 751.

Without a strong force of aircraft carriers in the Norwegian Sea, NATO air defenses in the area would be forced into a reactive mode of operation. Soviet Backfire bombers could exploit gaps in the air defense coverage enroute to their targets along the North Atlantic SLOCs. The presence of American CVBGs with their long-range F-14 interceptors would close those gaps and force the Soviets to counter this threat to their bombers before they attack the SLOCs. Redundant air defenses including fighters from Norway, Iceland, and even Great Britain, as well as the battle group's own defenses would make this a very costly endeavor for the Soviets. The air defense situation on the Northern Flank can be summed-up quite simply: "if the air over the North Cape is hotly contested, NATO will control the air over the Norwegian Sea."<sup>127</sup> What this means is that the Soviets will be too busy contesting NATO in the airspace over northern Norway to challenge NATO's control of the air over the Norwegian Sea. Operating under these conditions the various air defense forces of the Alliance should be able to achieve a highly favorable exchange ratio against Soviet bombers that venture out of the Kola Peninsula to strike at the battle groups in the Norwegian Sea. If properly coordinated, NATO air defenses could virtually eliminate the bomber threat to the aircraft carriers and the SLOCs.

Second, the Maritime Strategy is a forward-press strategy that seizes the initiative and seeks to engage the Soviets on terms that are favorable to the naval forces of the Alliance. On the Northern Flank this means that NATO will attempt ". . . to have its forces north of the GIUK gap before the Soviets are able to deploy their forces to the area."<sup>128</sup> Nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) armed

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<sup>127</sup>Wood and Hanley, p. 9.

<sup>128</sup>Stephen Broadbent, "Protection of Convoy Routes a Key

with ASW torpedoes and cruise missiles will initially take the fight to the enemy. Their primary mission will be to reduce the number of Soviet submarines that are operating in the Norwegian Sea. Maritime patrol aircraft will assist the SSNs in this effort while the carrier battle groups are held in reserve, waiting for their opportunity to strike. Additionally, the SSNs can employ their long-range cruise missiles (TLAM-C) in coordinated attacks with deep strike aircraft (like the FB-111, A-6E, TORNADO, or even the B-52s) against the Soviet bases on the Kola Peninsula. Attacks like these could be used to attrite both the long-range bomber force and the submarine force. Only after both of these threats are reduced will the battle groups move into the Norwegian Sea to establish control.

Strategic warning and the willingness of NATO's political leaders to act on that warning are critical to the success of this strategy. If NATO fails to gain control of the Norwegian Sea before the outbreak of hostilities, the Alliance will have to progressively reduce Soviet forces in the Norwegian Sea to gain control. This process is commonly referred to as roll back and it is the situation that NATO's maritime forces will most likely encounter on the Northern Flank.

Third, the Maritime Strategy is a combined-arms and coalition strategy. It is not a naval strategy that depends solely on U.S. Navy and Marine Corps assets. It is instead a joint service strategy that recognizes the unique contributions of America's allies and the need to integrate all of these assets. In addition to the United States and Norway, the maritime forces of Britain, the Netherlands, and West Germany will be integrated into the effort to gain and maintain control of the Norwegian Sea.<sup>1 2 9</sup>

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Objective for OCEAN SAFARI 85," Jane's Defence Weekly, 5 October 1985, p. 749.

The movement of three or more American aircraft carrier battle groups into the Norwegian Sea is considered necessary to achieve sea control.<sup>130</sup> Together these battle groups will form what is called a battle force. The primary mission of this battle force should be to seek out and destroy Soviet naval forces (air, surface, and subsurface) in the Norwegian Sea. With this mission accomplished, the battle force can then employ its considerable power projection capability (attack aircraft, land attack cruise-missiles, and naval gunfire) to support NATO ground forces fighting on the Central Front and the Northern Flank. Combined-arms operations are absolutely critical to the survival and success of the battle force in the Norwegian Sea. According to Admiral Watkins,

Carrier battle groups supported by attack submarines, land based aviation, and surveillance assets possess the combat capability necessary to operate successfully, even in high-threat areas.<sup>131</sup>

The crucial question that must be answered in the struggle for the control of the Norwegian Sea is--What NATO maritime asset has the best exchange ratio for a given Soviet threat? The preferred ASW platform is obviously the SSN which also has a major role in the anti-surface campaign. Maritime patrol aircraft can be used to augment the SSNs in the ASW effort and a coordinated attack

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<sup>129</sup>The West German Navy concentrates 75 percent of its surface forces and 100 percent of its aviation assets in the Baltic Sea. Despite this emphasis on the Baltic, the Germans provide over 30 percent of the NATO naval forces in the North Sea and above. "W German Admiral Discusses Naval Strategy," Jane's Defence Weekly, 1 June 1985, p. 959.

<sup>130</sup>A carrier battle group includes one or more aircraft carriers; several cruisers, destroyers, and frigates; and usually one or two SSNs operating in direct support. At least three aircraft carriers are considered necessary to provide the round-the-clock air defense that is considered essential in the Norwegian Sea.

<sup>131</sup>Edgar Ulsamer, "Bobbing, Weaving, and Fighting Smart," Air Force Magazine, August 1983, p. 92.



involving all strike assets should achieve the desired effect against the surface threat. Coordinating all the air defense assets against the long-range bomber threat is also necessary, but it should also be recognized that the carrier based F-14 with its Phoenix missile was designed specifically to counter this threat. Clearly, the CVBG should not be the primary ASW force nor should it be expected to stand alone against the air threat, but what it can do is make a substantial contribution in both of these warfare areas. The battle group's primary mission is power projection and in that area it has no rival.

Each year NATO performs a series of exercises to sharpen its skills at carrying out this strategy. NATO's recent OCEAN SAFARI 85 exercise was a clear indication of the Alliance's intention to reinforce and resupply Norway by sea. For the first time the exercise area was extended into the Norwegian Sea to demonstrate

the determination of NATO to carry out a "forward defence" strategy, not being content simply to contain any Warsaw Pact naval forces to the north east of the Greenland, Iceland, UK gap (GIUK) but to take positive steps to force the aggressor back towards the homeland.<sup>132</sup>

The argument that is most often offered in opposition to the Maritime Strategy is that it does not contribute to conventional deterrence in Western Europe<sup>133</sup>. Some opponents even believe that the strategy threatens conventional deterrence. The fundamental issue here is the allocation of scarce resources and the belief is that the Maritime Strategy with its 600-Ship Navy will take resources away from the forces on the Central Front. Building up to a

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<sup>132</sup>Daly, "Protection of Convoy Routes," p. 749.

<sup>133</sup>For a complete explanation of this conclusion see Robert W. Komer, "Maritime Strategy vs. Coalition Defense," Foreign Affairs, Summer 1982, pp. 1124-1144.

force of fifteen aircraft carrier battle groups is undeniably an expensive undertaking, but that force is considered necessary to achieve America's national security objectives. What the critics fail to recognize is that if the Soviets control the Norwegian Sea, the rear of the Central Front will be exposed to attack from the sea and the North Atlantic SLOCs will be much more vulnerable.

To counter the opposition on this issue, Secretary Lehman asserts that the Soviets will have to shift assets from the Central Region to defeat NATO forces on the Northern Flank.<sup>134</sup> Soviet actions in response to NATO exercises on the Northern Flank support the Secretary's assertions. During these exercises the Soviets have in fact sent long-range air assets from the Central Region to the north to reinforce their forces on the Kola Peninsula, but it is doubtful that they would divert these forces during a general war with NATO.

Another common criticism of the Maritime Strategy is that it is not endorsed and fully supported by the uniformed leaders of the U.S. Navy. A review of the literature reveals that this is not the case. The CNO and SACLANT are the two most noteworthy examples, but the opinion of Vice Admiral Mustin, the man who will personally lead NATO's naval striking forces in the Atlantic during a war with the Soviet Union, is probably more relevant. There is little doubt where Admiral Mustin stands on the issue. He specifically states that "there is no logical, historical or legal reason to insist on a military strategy that is purely defensive."<sup>135</sup>

The issue of feasibility is what prompts the controversy over whether or not the uniformed leadership of the

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<sup>134</sup>Getler, p. A4.

<sup>135</sup>"NATO Naval Posture 'Now Offensive'," Jane's Defence Weekly, 7 September 1985, p. 431.

Navy supports the Maritime Strategy. Critics of the Strategy assert that it should not be employed because it cannot be successfully carried out with current assets. They believe that carrier battle groups in the Norwegian Sea would be extremely vulnerable to attack by Soviet submarines and cruise-missile carrying bombers.<sup>136</sup> As a result of this vulnerability, the battle groups would be too busy defending their aircraft carriers to seize the initiative and take the fight to the enemy. There is some truth in these assertions, but what the critics fail to recognize is the inherently attrition-oriented nature of sea warfare. Carrier battle groups that are engaging and destroying attacking Soviet submarines are in fact, accomplishing their mission even, if they are absorbing some losses of their own.

A Soviet invasion of Norway can only be deterred if the Soviets are convinced that the Alliance has the resolve to defend Norwegian sovereignty and the clearest signal of that resolve is embodied in the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy.

## C. THE ROLE NUCLEAR WEAPONS

### 1. Is the Sea an Escalation Barrier?

There are two basic schools of thought concerning the role of nuclear weapons at sea during a major East-West war. The fundamental issue that divides the two schools is whether or not the sea can be considered an escalation barrier.<sup>137</sup> One school of thought which for the purpose of this study is referred to as pro-barrier, believes that both the U.S. and the Soviet Union will view the sea as an

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<sup>136</sup>For a complete discussion of this issue see Stansfield Turner and George Thibault, "Preparing for the Unexpected: The Need for a New Military Strategy," Foreign Affairs, Fall 1982, pp. 122-134.

<sup>137</sup>For an in-depth analysis of this issue see Gordon H. McCormick and Mark E. Miller, "American Seapower at Risk: Nuclear Weapons in Soviet Naval Planning," Orbis, Summer 1981, pp. 351-367.

escalation barrier. They postulate that nuclear weapons can be used at sea without their use spreading to land theaters because collateral damage will be minimal or non-existent. The other school of thought which will be referred to as anti-barrier, believes that the use of nuclear weapons at sea may or may not lead to their use on land. They postulate that this uncertainty about the escalation of nuclear war at sea will delay the maritime use of nuclear weapons until after the first exchange on land.

People who accept the pro-barrier line of thinking see much danger in moving large naval forces, especially carrier battle groups, into the Norwegian Sea. They believe that these forces are particularly vulnerable to the effects of nuclear weapons and that they make very inviting targets. While CVBGs represent a large concentration of American national power and resources, they also pose a substantial threat to the Kola Peninsula and Soviet forces in the Region. Senator Sam Nunn, during a Senate subcommittee hearing on Sea Power and Force Projection, offered the following analysis of the situation:

What I am saying to you is if you put all of those resources together into one task force and head right toward the Soviets very strategic targets in that area, I think . . . will lower the nuclear threshold and make it much more likely that that nuclear threshold will be crossed, because you will have such a huge, lucrative target. It will pose such a threat to them that I think it will be almost irresistible.<sup>138</sup>

The anti-barrier group believes that the Soviets will be deterred from using nuclear weapons at sea by the strategic nuclear deterrent of the United States. If the Soviets use nuclear weapons against a NATO naval force operating in the Norwegian Sea, the United States will surely respond in kind. The U.S. response could be an all-out

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<sup>138</sup>U.S. Senate, p. 3872.

offensive against the Soviet SSBN force or it could be a nuclear strike against the bases of the force that launched the original attack. Regardless, the response has the potential of leading up the escalation ladder and the threat of escalation beyond the maritime environment should theoretically deter the initial use of nuclear weapons by the Soviets at sea. The important point is that they do not discount the use of nuclear weapons altogether, but that they believe that if nuclear weapons are used at sea they will also be used on land.

The Navy's leaders view the vulnerability of its carrier battle groups in relative terms. They are quick to point out that a CVBG moving at thirty knots is much more difficult to target with nuclear weapons than a stationary airfield located anywhere in the world. This difficulty in targeting greatly enhances the survivability of the battle group and it should be factored into any assessment of CVBG vulnerability. In response to questions concerning the vulnerability of carrier battle groups to a barrage ICBM attack the CNO made the following observation which indicates the problems with targeting a CVBG with any weapon:

one carrier battle group takes up 56,000 square miles. The neighboring one is 250 miles away. He also takes up 56,000 square miles. The other is off in another direction, another 250 miles. This is not a World War II kind of disposition. These dispositions cover an area equivalent to all of central Europe. So we are not talking about ships that can be taken out with nuclear weapons in some kind of barrage attack. All the studies have shown this thinking to be unsound.<sup>139</sup>

## 2. Should We Sink Their SSBNs?

Another nuclear planning consideration that is extremely important in the northern region is the role of NATO's nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs). It is a

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<sup>139</sup>Ibid., p. 3879.

fairly well known fact, that American SSNs have demonstrated the capability in peacetime to penetrate Soviet SSBN bastions with relative ease<sup>140</sup> As a result of this capability there is a strong incentive to send the SSNs hunting for Soviet SSBNs especially in their Northern Fleet bastions.<sup>141</sup> If the United States and NATO employ their SSNs in this manner, what will be the Soviet response? This question has very serious implications, especially when it is realized that the Soviets do not possess a similar capability to threaten the West's SSBNs and that the U.S. is in the process of deploying a new generation hard target kill capable weapons (the Trident II D-5 SLBM and the MX ICBM) that severely threaten Soviet ICBMs.

In addition to their capability to penetrate the bastions and hunt Soviet SSBNs, NATO's attack submarines are also valuable assets in the Alliance's effort to gain and maintain control of the Norwegian Sea. Submarines are considered the preeminent ASW platforms and NATO SSNs will be absolutely essential to the ASW campaign in the Norwegian Sea and North Atlantic. It is believed that the interests of the Alliance and the United States will be better served by employing the vast majority of NATO's SSNs outside of the Soviet SSBN bastions to contain the flow of Soviet submarines into the Norwegian Sea.

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<sup>140</sup>Ackley, p.42.

<sup>141</sup>A closely related issue is whether or not a campaign against the conventional Soviet forces in the area would be interpreted as a threat to the SSBNs. See Barry R. Posen, "Inadvertent Nuclear War? Escalation and NATO's Northern Flank," International Security, Fall 1982, pp. 28-54.

## V. WHAT IS NEEDED?

Clearly, NATO's strategy on the Northern Flank should be built on the foundation of forward defense and the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy. However, this strategy alone does not answer all of the questions or achieve all of the objectives. There is a definite need to increase the amount of prepositioned equipment and NATO war supplies in Norway. This will reduce NATO's dependence on sealift to reinforce Norway during the initial stages of a war and it will strengthen deterrence. Because it is the only earmarked ground combat unit, the CAST Brigade should have the highest priority in the prepositioning effort.

If deterrence fails, forward defense is an absolute necessity to protect NATO's North Atlantic SLOCs and to guarantee the defense of Norway. Three factors will determine whether or not forward defense on the Northern Flank will be successful. First, the Alliance must react promptly to crisis situations throughout NATO. When East-West tensions in Europe rise or when superpower confrontation seems eminent somewhere else in the world, the political leaders of NATO must respond accordingly. If a real threat of war begins to materialize, NATO maritime forces must be allowed to deploy to their positions in the Norwegian Sea and the North Atlantic before the Soviets can concentrate their naval forces in these vital areas. NATO naval forces would be at a severe disadvantage if they have to fight their way into the Norwegian Sea, but if they are there when the fighting starts the Soviets may never make it out of the Barents Sea and Arctic Ocean.

The second critical factor will be NATO's ability to control the airspace above Norway. If a large portion of the earmarked aircraft reinforcements arrive in Norway before the outbreak of hostilities, the Soviets will be

hard-pressed to gain control of the air above northern Norway and the Norwegian Sea. NATO has sufficient aircraft assets dedicated to the defense of the region to retain control of Norwegian airspace and to maintain the flow of reinforcements into Norway. If the Soviets chose to challenge NATO in the air above Norway they will have to shift large numbers of aircraft out of the Central Front region to seize control of Norwegian airspace.

The success of NATO's ASW forces at containing the Northern Fleet's submarines is the third and most important factor affecting the results of forward defense on the Northern Flank. From the very outset of a crisis, NATO ASW forces must be in a position to locate, track, and destroy all Soviet submarines as they move into the Norwegian Sea. The critical element of this effort should be a SSN barrier along the northern periphery of the Norwegian Sea which is supported by additional layers of SSNs along the access routes to the North Atlantic. This task will be extremely difficult to perform because the Soviets will undoubtedly attempt to delay the start of hostilities until their forces are in advantageous positions. Regardless, the more Soviet submarines that are targeted during peacetime, the greater the chances of success.

Immediately after the start of the war, the SSN barrier should turn into a distant blockade of Soviet northern ports. Dense ASW minefields should replace the SSNs along the barrier and the SSNs should be used to destroy any Soviet submarines that penetrate the blockade. Other SSNs, maritime patrol aircraft, and carrier battle groups should be employed to support the blockade. They will be tasked with prosecuting any Soviet submarines in the southern Norwegian Sea and the North Atlantic.

American carrier battle groups are essential to the success of forward defense on the Northern Flank for three crucial reasons. First, CVBGs will be a necessary element



of the NATO effort to establish and maintain control of the Norwegian Sea. Their primary purpose will be to seek and destroy the Soviet Northern Fleet. Second, the air defense aircraft of the battle groups will be needed to fill the gaps in the air defense network over the Northern Flank. Finally, from a central location between the two regions the attack aircraft of the CVBGs could provide desperately needed close air support for the ground forces fighting on the Central Front and Northern Flank.

It would be foolish to think that the Soviets would not oppose the movement of American carrier battle groups into the Norwegian Sea and it would be just as foolish to assume that the battle groups could by themselves defeat the Soviet anti-carrier forces which they would surely encounter upon entering the Norwegian Sea. Undeniably, the carrier battle group has its vulnerabilities, but it is still a very capable fighting force with tremendous power projection capabilities. Ongoing programs to improve the carrier battle group's AAW (anti-air warfare) and ASW defenses are essential to maintain the CVBG's capability to operate in high-threat areas. Of particular interest should be countermeasures to reduce the low-flyer threat, methods to defeat the long-range bomber threat, and improved detection capabilities to counter the latest generation of Soviet nuclear-powered submarines.

On the Northern Flank, integration of NATO assets is necessary in all warfare environments--land, air, surface, and subsurface. NATO force fighting on the ground in Norway will need close air support from fighter/ground attack aircraft stationed in Norway and on aircraft carriers operating off the Norwegian coast. All NATO air defense assets, including those in Norway, Iceland, Greenland, and Britain as well as those flying from carrier flight decks, must be coordinated to achieve control of the airspace over the Northern Flank. Attack aircraft, cruise missiles, and naval

gunfire must be combined with land based strike aircraft (including B-52s armed with Harpoons) to eliminate the Soviet surface threat. Finally, the ASW forces of the Alliance must work together to contain and destroy Soviet submarines operating in the Norwegian Sea. The NATO ASW forces that will be involved in this effort include SSNs, land based maritime patrol and surveillance aircraft, carrier based ASW aircraft, and ASW capable surface ships.<sup>142</sup> Aggressive actions, improved capabilities, and coordination of assets will make forward defense on the Northern Flank work.

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<sup>142</sup>Even B-52s could be employed in this effort because of their mining capability.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

The successful defense of the Northern Flank is absolutely essential to the NATO Alliance. If NATO fails to defend this flank, its vital North Atlantic SLOCs will be severely threatened and the rear of the Central Front will be exposed to attack from the sea.

Norway's geo-strategic location makes it the key to the defense of the Northern Flank and a significant NATO advantage. It is an advantage that must be defended both in peace and in war. Analysis of the nature of the Soviet threat to Norway reveals that the Soviets are pursuing a strategy that is designed to neutralize Norway from the very outset of a conflict with NATO. Ideally, what the Soviets want is to peacefully force Norway to withdraw from NATO before a conflict starts and their preparations for war facilitate this process.

Because of Norway's reliance on NATO's deterrent shield and self-imposed restrictions, its defense is heavily dependent on reinforcements from its allies. To prevent Norway's neutralization, NATO must possess the capability to reinforce and resupply Norway during a war with the Soviet Union. Currently this capability is dependent on NATO's ability to control the Norwegian Sea. The Soviets will undoubtedly try to control the Norwegian Sea at start of a war with NATO because of its obvious strategic importance. To guarantee the defense of Norway and the Alliance's North Atlantic SLOCs, NATO must prevent this from happening. If NATO does not pursue a strategy and possess the capability to challenge the Northern Fleet in the Norwegian Sea, Norway could be lost to NATO even before the outbreak of a war.

A strategy of forward defense, which is articulated in the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy, is considered the most appropriate strategy for NATO on the Northern Flank. A

defensive barrier at the GIUK gap should be an integral part of this strategy, but it cannot by itself achieve the Alliance's basic objectives in the region. NATO should also continue its program of increasing its stockpiles of war supplies in Norway.

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