



AIR WAR COLLEGE

RESEARCH REPORT

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UNITED STATES NAVAL DIPLOMACY IN THE
THIRD WORLD

COMMANDER DAVID T. GATO, USNR

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MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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UNITED STATES
NAVAL DIPLOMACY
IN THE THIRD WORLD

by

David T. Gato
Commander, USNR

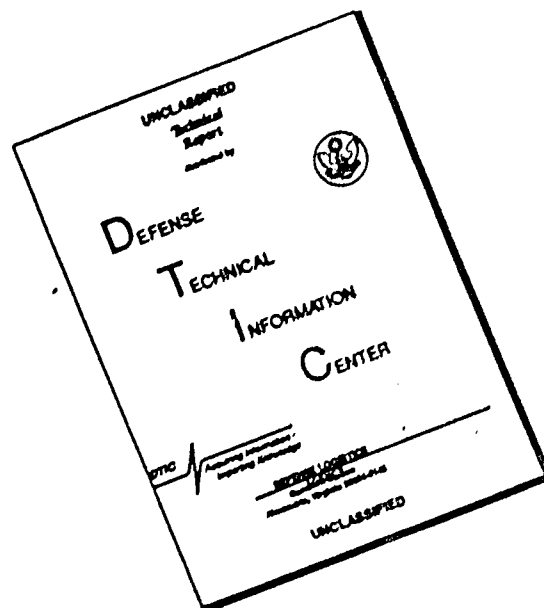
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AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: The United States Naval Diplomacy in the Third World

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This paper analyzes The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the *- the* unique capabilities of United States Navy carrier and surface forces to serve as military and diplomatic tools of United States national security policy towards Third World coastal nations in peacetime and in operations short of general war. A coherent national security policy must take into account the "changing face" of the Third World political, economic, and military scene. The development of this policy should include a clearly defined role for the application of U. S. military forces in what Clausewitz terms "the continuation of policy by other means." The author intends to argue ^{that} ~~how~~ the U.S. Navy is best suited to execute a variety of national security/naval diplomacy roles in any of the Third World coastal states, to identify Soviet interests in the Third World, and to explore the role of naval diplomacy in protecting U. S. national interests in the Third World now and in the future.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Commander David T. Gato (B.S. Aerospace Engineering, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University) has been in the Navy since 1972. He served as an F-4 Radar Intercept Officer (RIO) in Fighter Squadron 74 flying F-4J's for two Mediterranean cruises aboard USS FORRESTAL (CV-59), a RIO instructor in the Naval Air Training Command as a member of Training Squadron 86, and for the preceeding eight years he has been on active duty with the Naval Air Reserve at NAS Miramar, CA flying in the F-4 and F-14 first as a member of Fighter Squadron 301 and then as a member of the Carrier Air Wing Reserve 30 Staff. Commander Gato is a graduate of the Air War College, Class of 1988.

UNITED STATES
NAVAL DIPLOMACY
IN THE THIRD WORLD

1. Introduction.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the unique capabilities of United States Navy carrier and surface forces to serve as military and diplomatic tools of United States national security policy towards Third World coastal nations in peacetime and in operations short of general war now, and in the future. I will argue how this task, as part of the Navy's peacetime global mission, can be accomplished routinely by the Navy (as it is currently structured) more effectively than by the Air Force or the Army. The thesis is divided into seven major sections:

1. An Introduction;
2. United States national security policy and the Third World;
3. How U. S. national security interests became worldwide in scope;
4. The Soviet Union in the Third World;
5. United States naval diplomacy in the Third World;
6. Future U. S. combat operations in the Third World;
7. A Conclusion.

What is the national security strategy that the President and his advisers must formulate? "Our national strategy is a description of how we intend to ensure the security of this nation, our vital interests and the future of liberty in the world.... Our strategy for the protection of these interests must not just comprehend our fundamental values, but must extend to American interests on a global scale."¹ Developing a national security strategy applicable in both a broad sense (towards a group of nations in one region), and in a narrow sense (to a specific nation), requires careful consideration of the means available to implement and the ends desired of that same policy. The policy development process is essentially the same regardless of whether the policy will apply to an ally or an adversary. A coherent national security policy should be all-encompassing and take into account the "changing face" of the world political, economic, and military scene. This strategy determines when, where, and how U. S. military forces will be used in supporting national interests.

II. United States National Security Policy and the Third World

It is important to remember that the national security of the United States is not based exclusively on military power. Economic factors and cultural influences are also important determinants of security. The U.S. policy of "containment," which had its roots in the late 1940's, may be the only consistent national security policy that the United States has been able to implement from administration to administration since World War II and even that policy has been subject to periodic revision. Most recently, because of the "Gorbachev Era" in the Soviet Union, the U. S. may decide to apply the policy of containment even more selectively in certain situations rather than universally as tried previously. Because Third World countries are where both superpowers often have interests, a more realistic policy of U. S. intervention may be applicable to ensure peace, stability, and to check the growth of Soviet influence in the future. However, as far as intervention is concerned, both the U.S. and the Soviet Union will tread cautiously in the Third World to avoid a direct confrontation that neither wants. Each will weigh the advantages and disadvantages, examine their own

interests, and the chances for escalation before intervening . Intervention may not only occur because of rival superpower interest though. Third World countries have problems of their own which may effect regional stability and thus attract our concern.

In an ideal sense, national security policy should be reasonably consistent from one administration to the next (as containment seems to have been). The final policy developed should include a clearly defined role for the application of U. S. military force in the implementation of American foreign policy as it relates to maintaining national security.

The President defines the objectives of U. S. national security policy and foreign policy for his administration, the way that he perceives the role of American military forces in implementing this policy, and the extent to which military force will be applied in an international situation. The Congress of the United States may choose to disagree with him (and often does), especially as to the role of American military forces when used to implement American foreign policy and to maintain or enforce American national security policy. It can do this by refusing or limiting the funding for U. S. military involvement in a certain area of the world or by invoking the War Powers Act.

which originated in Congress as a limit to the Executive Branch's ability to commit U. S. forces to a combat environment without a declaration of war.

Developing successful policies to deal with the Third World and implementing them will require a great deal of cooperation between the Executive and the Legislative branches of the government. Foreign and national security policy initiatives do not belong exclusively to the President anymore. The Congress represents an American business community that has a vested interest in what the Third World has to offer. Congress also represents many Americans who have a deep, humanitarian concern for the current and future welfare of the population of the Third World. Their interest translates into votes. The President cannot make policy without the approval of the Congress. Even covert operations deemed important to national security by the Executive Branch somehow find a way into the public domain. Any future decision to commit American forces to hostile shores has to be taken after a careful decision making process is completed. The Congress wants to be advised of and even take part in the decision making process and be kept abreast of the results.

In regards to the use of naval force in particular, the President, as the Commander-in-Chief, must consider what the effect will be of the appearance of a U. S. warship under the circumstances of the deployment to a selected foreign shore. "Showing our flag" can be intimidating to a Third World country or any country that hasn't extended an invitation to visit. Third World countries are much like us in many respects. Despite their lack of sophisticated technology, they react to intimidation or unwelcome intervention the same way we would.

Third World countries have one thing in common with the more advanced countries - a tendency to fight when threatened, humiliated (emphasis added), or deprived of something they value, or resort to arms when opportunities arise to settle old scores, to acquire something they covet, or to spread some ideology.²

They are not afraid to confront the United States. Presidential advisors must formulate the reaction the Third World country will have, not just the reaction he wants them to have. Perhaps naval diplomacy will not be the optimum solution to the problem. Economic aid and an increased cultural and social awareness of that country's problems by the United States may be part of the solution too. To a land-locked country, one without a navy, or any significant merchant fleet or maritime trade, naval diplomacy may not have an effect at all.

This paper will limit itself to the discussion of the effects of naval diplomacy on those Third World countries with a coastline or ocean access.

Being ever aware of the effect the press has on world opinion, the president must be very careful about where the "Big Stick" of American national security policy is actually waved. The United States can ill afford the accusation that it is meddling in the internal affairs of a Third World country. Among these countries, especially the so called "non-aligned nations," there is an extremely loud anti-American propaganda voice often backed by the Soviet Union. Anti U. S. propaganda can be (and has been) very counterproductive to our national interests and we don't seem to be very good at negating its effects. An uneducated and uninformed population may be quick to accept this propaganda as the truth and the United States must be ever aware of alternative interpretations of its coercive naval diplomacy.

Additionally, how the rest of the world reacts can be just as important as the reaction in the target region. World news media representatives will always be there to examine the mission and motives of American military forces whether they are in-country or over the horizon out of sight of the general population. The

media will applaud our successes and investigate our failures. As an example, escorting the reflagged Kuwaiti tankers in the Persian Gulf (a confined, but accessible area to the media) has been especially difficult for the Navy because news coverage has hampered the secrecy of intended ship movements. It is an essential diplomatic mission though, and press coverage wanes as does the "newness" of the mission. The naval escorting, as a diplomatic move, has served to show our solidarity with moderate Arab leaders in the region as most Kuwaiti oil continues to move out of the Gulf on unescorted, non-U. S. flagged tankers.³ Correspondents know where convoys are going and if they can't locate them, they hire an airplane or helicopter and go looking. The media also closely watched (and was watched by) the Sixth Fleet in the Gulf of Sidra in April 1986 prior to the American attack on Libyan coastal targets. Deceptive maneuvers by the carriers, designed to deny Soviet tattletale vessels our intentions, coincidentally happened to prevent the press from being in the vicinity of the carriers when the airstrike was launched.

During the final twelve years of the Twentieth Century the United States faces a number of problems in developing and implementing an effective national

security policy and diplomatic methods to deal with the growing number of countries that make up the Third world: the Lesser Developed Countries (LDC's); Emerging Nations (EN's); the Nouveaux Riches (NR's). The countries of the Third World are important to our national security. They are an untapped source of raw materials, a market for our manufactured goods, the home of an inexpensive labor pool, a possible source of support in the United Nations, and, depending on the nation, a cornerstone of stability in their region. Additionally, many Third World countries are so located that we cannot allow them to fall into the Soviet sphere of influence uncontested. The future national security policies of the United States toward the Third World must account for Third World interests as well as our own in order to maintain their independence and/or non-aligned status, foster democratic ideals, and prevent them from falling under Soviet domination. These people can become easy prey for communist revolutionaries who preach economic equality for all and death to the capitalists. Only recently has the Third World recognized that communism has been a dismal economic failure everywhere it is found. Military power or anti-American rhetoric have not proven to be substitutes for economic success.

III. U. S. National Security Interests - Worldwide in Scope.

Although colonialism and imperialism are words that have all but disappeared from the vocabularies of diplomats speaking of their own country's intentions, they still seem to exist but under a different guise. They have been replaced by what I term, "regions of national interest." The world may not be bipolar, but there are certainly two major camps seeking influence in the Third World. "The problem of decolonization and nation-building associated with the emergence of Third World states from colonial rule has led in many cases to political, social and economic instabilities that threaten the survival of legitimate governments and compromise U. S. security interests."⁴

For the past 42 years the struggle for influence over selected regions of interest in the world has been between the United States and the industrialized, free market economies of the West and the Soviet Union and its client states. The Soviets view their national security interests in the Third World no less importantly than the United States does. Immediately after World War II the United States and its allies may have had an advantage over the Soviet Union when it came to an ability to increase their influence in the

world. The Soviet Union was a continental power still recovering from the devastating effects of World War II.

The United States possessed a string of worldwide bases at the close of World War II. The Soviet Union was a continental Asian land power lacking warm water ports with open ocean access. Some American bases constructed during World War II were developed into a network of airbases which could support American strategic bomber forces targeted against the Soviet Union or as forward bases for American tactical air forces. These tactical air forces were available to "put the pressure on" as needed to locally enforce containment or to provide the airpower which might be necessary to ensure our military superiority in regional conflicts. The Soviet Union was surrounded on three sides by unfriendly forward airfields and was soon to be vulnerable over the North Pole to ballistic missile attack. A United States military presence was visible around the globe in both developed and developing countries. There was nowhere that these forces could not reach. The Strategic Air Command (SAC) was an umbrella under which the rest of the world could seek shelter from the Soviets, but from which no nation could hide. At the same time the Navy was still trying

to define a strategic nuclear mission for its carrier-borne strike forces. As ranges of aircraft increased and inflight refueling techniques for SAC bombers and TAC fighters were perfected, dependence on these forward bases declined. Coincidentally, a rise in nationalism among the countries where bases were located and the traditional desire of Americans to look after problems at home first, additionally contributed to base closures.⁵ Despite these closures, the Strategic Air Command was the very visible "big gun" of American national security policy. If the United States Air Force was charged with retaliating against the Soviet Union, there could be no doubt as to what weapons it could bring to bear against a lesser nation.

It is difficult to speculate how the local population felt about a nearby SAC base. Did they feel secure, threatened, or maybe just envious of the small number of their neighbors who benefited economically from the presence of Americans with money to spend? The presence of an American base on foreign soil could be of questionable advantage to the locals. It does not seem to stimulate local economic independence. It would be a benefit to the economy by pouring American dollars into the country, but it might take away the personal dignity of the local population as they performed

menial tasks for pay on base instead of what they would normally be doing. This could make them primary targets for nationalistic fervor. One could look to the Philippines in 1988 as a possible example.

In the late 1980's American military basing rights and overflight privileges are considerably more restricted than they were 25 years ago. The U. S. Navy and especially its carrier battle groups have become a versatile national security tool because of their flexibility. The mechanics of rapidly applying American military force to a troubled area are more complex than ever before. Even our friends may be reluctant to allow overflights by American military aircraft. The Navy is an alternative. Witness the Libyan raid of April 1986 and the circuitous route the F-111's had to fly to reach their target. It is easy to pay lip service to anti-terrorist activity, as it appears the French government did prior to the raid, but difficult to take meaningful action against it. And France is not an adversary of the United States!

Third World countries tend to be clustered together in Africa, Latin America, and Southern Asia. Most resent the superpower battle for a dominating influence among them and simply want military or economic aid without political obligations or no

superpower presence at all. Unless they were at war with a neighboring state, I doubt they would invite either an American or Soviet military presence into their nation unless they felt their security was being threatened.

It is not to the benefit of the United States to ignore a Third World country's wishes or its national sovereignty. However, if we feel there is a threat to our national security (viz., building an airfield intended to support Soviet long-range naval reconnaissance aircraft; or undeniable evidence a nation is actively supporting terrorism in this hemisphere) or to regional stability, a sovereignty violation may be required. Actions speak louder than rhetoric in the Third World. Decisive action may be the only recourse if diplomacy does not achieve the desired results.

Equally complex is how to demonstrate American determination to use military force (when necessary) and interest in the Third World for protracted periods of time without introducing ground forces, land-based air units (uninvited) and all the headaches they cause, or any weapon platform whose capabilities may not be best suited for the given situation. (The unspotted 16-inch rounds of the New Jersey flying into Lebanon being

a good example of the latter.) How then can the interests of the United States be demonstrated or power projected when necessary? How can the national security interests of the United States be ensured, and ultimately, enforced in the Third World? The United States has friends in the Third World we intend to keep and protect. Additionally, the United States opposes totalitarian expansionism in the Third World and supports local resistance to communist governments.⁶ These factors require a strong, versatile military force capable of power projection to be available for deployment to Third World nations or their vicinity. The Navy is that force.

The Carter Administration was very reluctant to use force to achieve what diplomacy had failed to accomplish. A change occurred in 1981. "The Reagan administration...rejected an assumption that had become widely accepted during the decade of detente: that force no longer had much utility in international politics".⁷

Particularly in the US, due to its political process, the use of even small amounts of military force is likely to have a disproportionately large political impact....The point is this: even relatively small uses of force can have dramatic political impact.⁸

Most immediately this meant an increased incidence of combat for U. S. naval forces around the world: the Gulf of Sidra in 1981; Lebanon in 1983; Grenada in 1983; the Libyan air strike of 1986; and most recently in the Persian Gulf. Our naval forces re-enforced the rights of freedom of navigation for Mr. Qaddafi and punished him for involvement in state-sponsored terrorism. Joint U. S. forces prevented the development of an additional communist client, Grenada, in the Caribbean. A U. S. Navy battle group demonstrated our support of the legitimate government of Lebanon in 1983. As it turned out, the President did not act contrary to American public opinion either. Although the American public and the Congress seem to be opposed to the use of force as a diplomatic tool until we are actually provoked or American lives are in danger, their attitude changes once that provocation has occurred, as it did with the terrorist massacre at the Rome airport and the attack on the Berlin disco. A Gallup Poll taken after the Libyan Raid revealed that 62% of the Americans polled felt that President Reagan "makes wise use of military forces to solve foreign policy problems" and only 26% thought he "was too quick to employ military forces" - a significant margin of approval.⁹ Of special note is that all of this combat

involved operations between the United States and a Third World country and all of it involved the Navy performing a primary role. "The U. S. Navy's capability to protect our sea lines of communications and to project power remains crucial to Western security."¹⁰ It goes beyond using naval vessels only as wartime combatants.

Warships can be instruments of diplomacy as well as instruments of force. They can be used in "...support of a country's general bargaining position, particular negotiating stances and influence building tactics, and for representational tasks of various kinds."¹¹ However, would it be easy for a Third World country to recognize exactly what the purpose of an American warship off its coast is supposed to be? How many people in the country would know it was there and why? Is it acting in a coercive manner as a warship or in a non-coercive manner as an influence builder?¹² Is it meant to be an influence on the military and political leaders only and not on the general public? Any appearance by an uninvited American naval vessel off the coast of a Third World country may not be welcome even as positive reinforcement because of how neighboring countries may react or a regional desire to remain non-aligned.

What must the President consider before turning to naval diplomacy? First, he must draw on the experiences of the past, but he can only hypothesize as to the future capabilities of potential adversaries. Second, the United States does not want to go to war and seeks to deter adversaries from initiating combat operations against it. Third, he must consider the response of both allies and adversaries to changes in American military and naval force structure and security policy.¹³ The arrival of an American military or naval force can easily be interpreted as a powerful, unwanted, and uninvited persuader. Suddenly the United States is imposing its will on a smaller country that is obviously unable to respond in kind. Quickly a United States naval vessel on the scene changes from friend or neutral to a foe.

A clear distinction between the exercise of naval power and the exercise of naval influence will always be muddled by the relative subtlety of the stages through which a warship can be transformed: from a platform for a dance-band and cavorting local dignitaries, to a haven of refuge for nationals in distress, to a gun platform for shore bombardment.¹⁴

This is the important flexibility inherent to naval diplomacy and is the main point of this thesis. A mission to show the flag can quickly change to one of protecting or demonstrating our national interests. The

United States Navy can and does play a useful role in the implementation of American foreign policy and it is essential to the national security policy in peace as well as war.

The United States government insists on freedom of navigation on the high seas while recognizing a legitimate territorial right to a maximum 12 nautical mile limit off shore for each sovereign nation whose border includes a coastline. The extent of coastal sovereignty (beyond the twelve mile limit we recognize) is a hotly debated issue these days. In South America, some countries have claimed exclusive economic zones out 200 nautical miles from shore to protect fishing grounds they consider essential to their fragile economies. A few countries actually claim a territorial limit that extends 200 nautical miles off shore. They prohibit other nations from fishing within these waters and enforce their territorial claims.

Additionally, can a small, Third World country located at a strategic chokepoint be granted the same rights of sovereignty as a large nation? What if they abuse that sovereignty just because of their location? Who can challenge them? The oceans are highways for international commerce. The same sea lanes offer passage to America's naval vessels. Freedom of the seas

is essential in peacetime; control of the seas may be vital in war.¹⁵ "Distant responsibilities which involve the use of the seas will, in times of conflict, require the potential of controlling relevant sea areas, or at least denying them to the enemy."¹⁶

The nations of southern Africa, Central and South America, the oil-rich Persian Gulf states, the Indian subcontinent, and the Middle East are all accessible by sea and stand near vital highways in the ocean. The nations of the Third World can have a great effect on the merchant shipping traffic off their coasts by expending relatively little effort in chokepoint control especially when prompted by the Soviet Union or local ultra-nationalists.

For nearly a hundred years, technology has been taking away the balance from states with ocean going navies toward those states concerned only with defending their coasts. Mines, short range submarines, missile firing attack craft, radar controlled coastal artillery or missiles, and bomber aircraft, all are more cost-effective in or near territorial waters than warships operating from distant bases. Many countries can afford the less expensive coastal defense, but few can support a navy capable of overcoming it.¹⁷

The Navy is capable of preventing a renegade Third World country from long-term disruption of merchant travel on nearby sea lines of communication (SLOC's).

The Third World is ripe for change, but what will it change to? What Great Power will have the most influence in the Third World?

Washington defined the greatest danger to American security as stemming from the new states' functional not ideological attraction to communism... thus communism was seen not just as a military threat. In the newly politically aware and poorer areas of the Third World, communism was viewed as attractive because it appeared to promise a fairly rapid and disciplined way of bringing about political, social, economic, and cultural changes.¹⁸

A Third World dictator who heads a totalitarian government can quickly gain access to sophisticated military equipment that will secure his power base by purchasing it from international arms merchants or by simply turning to the Soviet Union. He may not even have to claim he is a communist. The Soviets could use the opportunity to offer military assistance to gain a foothold in another country.

Both superpowers maneuver on the oceans and take advantage of ocean access to Third World countries to gain advantage and project power. Success seems very unpredictable, but "... the Third World is, if anything, both less stable and more important to us than [to] the Soviet Union."¹⁹ The Persian Gulf is a good example. The future energy supplies of Europe and Japan are linked to the security of the Arab nations

not involved in the Iran-Iraq war. By using unsophisticated mines and small attack craft, the Iranians have focused continuing world-wide attention on their war with Iraq and their hatred of the United States. Even cooperation by the superpowers in meeting this threat does not eliminate the problem. The mines and the speedboats are a threat and will remain a potential threat to Gulf shipping until the Iranians are convinced to end their use or the United States, with or without its allies, takes military action to eliminate the mines in storage and their delivery platforms.

IV. The Soviet Union in the Third World - A Brief Look.

How successful has the Soviet Union been in trying to expand its influence in the Third World? What instruments of power has the Soviet Union utilized to implement policy there? What have they accomplished with their naval diplomacy? The Soviets seek influence among, and assurances of friendship from, Third World nations. They offer an ordered, Marxist-Socialist economy as an alternative to the ravaged economies of many Third World states previously exploited or ignored by the capitalist West. Additionally, the Soviets seek forward bases for their own forces and they want to deny the U. S. access to the strategic minerals located in some Third World countries. To achieve their desired objectives, a government amenable to their policies or at least one which is either non-aligned or anti US, the Soviets have offered military and economic aid on very attractive terms and they seem willing to wait longer than a Western nation would for a favorable outcome.

In Latin America the Soviet Union finds itself competing for influence in America's backyard. It is not a high priority area to the Soviet Union because it lies outside their defense perimeter and economic zone of influence. "It supplies the Soviet Union with no

critical materials or important markets."²⁰ The Soviet Union appears to have five objectives in Latin America: widen the economic disparity between the United States and the region; prevent raw materials from the area from reaching the United States; expand local communist parties; put a lid on Chinese influence in the area; and continue their special relationship with Cuba.²¹

The Soviets are actively involved in Africa with advisors in Angola and in the Horn. Their actions in Africa have strained the limits of detente. The mineral deposits of southern Africa are a rich prize they want to deny to the West. In wartime, naval outposts in Africa may enable the Soviets to threaten vital oil shipping lanes from the Persian Gulf.²² The Soviets have been relatively successful in the Horn of Africa despite their ejection from Somalia and they have "virtually displaced Chinese influence in Southern Africa."²³

How have the Soviets accomplished their aims in the Third World?

The instruments of Soviet power in the Third World are the traditional ones used by great powers...economic and military aid, technical assistance, trade, diplomacy, propaganda, and in a few rare instances, the use of military force. Of these, economic and military assistance have been particularly important.²⁴

Trade with the Third World is important to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union supplies "manufactured goods, military equipment, and petroleum" for hard currency to purchase raw materials.²⁵ This trade is not as important as it used to be; however, they continue to try to make the Third World countries, which do accept their aid, dependent on them for trade. Perhaps because they are unable to produce what the Third World desires (technology and an economic success model), the Soviet Union has shifted to a policy of supplying military aid to the Third World to gain favor. But their great successes in the Arab world have not translated into any influence over domestic or foreign policy.²⁶ Their economic aid has had a minimal impact and "as a model for economic development in the Third World the Soviet Union has been a conspicuous failure."²⁷ The continuing lack of improvement in their own economy may increasingly limit future Soviet military and economic aid packages to the Third World even more than it currently does.

Moscow's naval buildup (in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf)...tapered off about three years ago, and now the financially strapped Soviets may be trying to reduce their involvement in Vietnam and Cambodia, just as they are trying to get out of Afghanistan.²⁸

The Soviets sometimes use naval diplomacy as effectively as the United States does among Third World nations. They use it to demonstrate their own interest in the area, to move or reinforce troops, and even as sea-based fire support. However, "...the Soviet Navy has been significantly less 'operational' than those of the West for maritime intervention."²⁹

What is the effect of Soviet interest in the Third World on American national security policy? It drives that portion of our national security policy formulation. However, should we consider Soviet influence in the Third World from a slightly different view? I think so.

...Soviet involvement in the Third World is antagonistic to Western interests in general and to U. S. interests in particular....Most of Moscow's biggest victories have resulted from events over which it had no control ...There is a tendency,...to assume that every defeat suffered by the United States in the Third World is a result of Soviet cunning and planning. In fact, like the West, the Soviet Union sometimes comes out looking good in spite of what it did.³⁰

V United States Naval Diplomacy in the Third World.

What then are the special attributes of the United States Navy when utilized as an instrument of foreign or national security policy in dealing with Third World nations? First, the Navy has an undeniable presence (in international waters) that can be directly controlled by the President. It can be advanced or withdrawn from these same international waters without the consent of neighboring states. The U. S. Navy's Maritime Strategy, with its emphasis on forward deployment of naval combat forces in peacetime as well as during periods of international tension, has made ships available for naval diplomatic missions in the Third World. The Maritime Strategy intends to send a strong message to both ally and adversary. The fact that these ships are forward deployed and highly visible worldwide is a demonstration of our global capability. Military power, and the ability to project it at will, is a message that is easy to understand. "Naval diplomacy for the first time has become a significant preoccupation of maritime strategists, an important declared function of navies and an important justification for having them."³¹ Since World War II the United States has relied on the Navy more than any other service when it

was necessary to apply force in support of political objectives.³²

When used effectively, naval diplomacy in its various guises can reassure, strengthen, symbolize a growing relationship or commitment, establish rights and interests in near or distant regions, impress onlookers with the country's technical competence or diplomatic skills, restrain allies or adversaries, bolster the strength and confidence of allies and associates or third parties, encourage the independent-mindedness of third parties, encourage or dissuade states in relation to particular policies, signal intentions or expectations, create uncertainty when necessary, neutralize the naval diplomacy of adversaries, complicate the problems and planning of adversaries and their associates, deter inimical actions, foreclose the options of competing states, reduce the confidence of selected targets, cause losses of faith in the associates of one's adversaries, discourage opponents, create a different politico-military environment and set of expectations, increase the level of profitable interaction with near or distant countries, gain access to new countries, maintain or improve access with existing associates, and create a degree of dependency and so the possibility for manipulation.³³

No matter how noble we see the aims of our democracy, we still need to be able to exert military influence over adversaries and allies. When economic measures and statesmanship have failed, the United States Navy has been a tool for exercising this influence. "Since 1955 (to 1975), the Navy has been involved, on the average, in more than nine out of every ten incidents."³⁴

How can the United States Navy serve as a diplomatic tool? The warships themselves can convey a

message by their appearance. Contrary to what it may seem, these warships do not always have to be aircraft carriers either.

The principal agents of naval diplomacy seem likely to remain surface ships, which have many obvious advantages over aircraft or submarines in this role....Flexibility and the capacity to operate significantly at many different levels of violence are particularly desirable attributes of individual ships.... 35

Certainly an unfriendly Third World country or one wishing to remain "non aligned" is not going to invite a United States naval vessel into port, but a neutral or friendly one might. It can send a message to its neighbors as to which side of this bipolar world it is aligning itself with or it can maintain mutually beneficial relations with both superpowers by inviting each to make port visits and demonstrate its non aligned status. It is important that friends of the United States be reassured that we are available to protect their interests and not just our own. Port visits during regular deployments are a way to accomplish this.

Naval warships can serve as diplomatic tools in seven basic ways. they are versatile; they can be controlled easily; they are highly mobile; they are self contained instruments of force projection; they can go anywhere the water is deep enough; they are a

symbol of our intent; and they can spend considerable time on station.³⁶ In the following paragraphs these will be examined in detail.

The versatility of naval vessels cannot be denied. They are, and always have been, capable of performing a number of different tasks. The crews are trained and prepared to perform these tasks. The Navy could be assigned to perform humanitarian missions which may enhance the local perspective of the United States. The recent commissioning of the hospital ship USS Mercy is a good example. Deployed for the first time on a cruise to the Western Pacific in early 1987, it provided medical care to underdeveloped areas. Oceanographic research vessels can make friendly port calls. The crews of both combat and non-combat vessels often assist the local populations with self-help projects to improve their local communities. American naval vessels can escort merchant shipping of friendly nations involved in local conflicts as in the Persian Gulf. These ships need not necessarily be combatants (although, admittedly they would be ill advised not to be) to act as escorts.

Once again, the presence of American naval vessels sends a message to the Third World and the Soviet Union: The United States has an interest in this

region. In this capacity, naval ships and aircraft can provide overwhelming firepower. United States naval vessels or aircraft can deliver a large amount of ordnance to any assigned target without involving additional support assets (such as tankers, clearance for overflights, etc.).

Naval bombardment of weaker states that cannot hit back effectively is a classic form of gunboat diplomacy. The latter shows little sign of going away. It used to be fashionable to argue that its days were numbered with the spread of relatively well organized sovereign states and the acquisition by them of increasingly powerful defensive weapons.³⁷

Violence and destruction can arrive from airplanes, helicopters, and surface platforms with deadly effect. Given a well-defined naval mission with clear objectives, the Navy can perform all assigned combat scenarios when dealing with a Third World country. "It convinced Colonel Qaddafi that the fleet the United States can and will punish them if need be, which is the point of having forward-deployed forces in the first place."³⁸ "An American carrier battle group has relatively little to fear from a few isolated missile boats or badly handled aircraft. It can operate almost at will."³⁹ A carrier battlegroup, a surface action group, or an amphibious assault force possesses the versatility and the mobility to be sore cost effective.

militarily useful, and survivable than any out-of-CONUS U. S. military installation.

Although the cost of a battle group (at between 18 and 20 billion dollars) is expensive, we don't have to abandon it as we do our forward bases if our allies decide not to renew our basing agreements as might occur in Spain, Greece and the Philippines. Naval forces project power and our national interest until withdrawn by the National Command Authority, not a host country.

Naval vessels can apply the pressure as needed in the vicinity of a coastal Third World country. They can be very visible or they can be just over the horizon. They can be a friendly presence in port or they can be a reminder of our resolve off the coast. They (warships) "...are less disruptive psychologically than are land-based forces and thus are likely to be less offensive diplomatically; if desirable, naval forces can remain nearby but out of sight."⁴⁰ If their mission is completed, they can be withdrawn without crossing any international boundaries. Nobody owns the oceans beyond recognized territorial limits. The majority of Third World nations do not possess the assets to challenge the U. S. Navy if it ventures into their unrecognized 200 mile limit. Additionally, economic

sovereignty over an area might not be challenged as readily (by us) as territorial sovereignty claimed beyond 12 miles and the right to freedom of navigation. Right of passage is not the same as a right to exploit. If the reason for their deployment is not successful, naval vessels can be withdrawn without the loss of prestige that would accompany a troop withdrawal from foreign shores. At the President's command a warship can become as visible as he wants it to be or disappear just as quickly.

Naval forces are inherently mobile. "Ships are easier to move about than are army or land based aircraft units...and more rapidly than any land-based unit of comparable size." "All the sea is a highway for commerce and military vessels. Since two thirds of the planet is covered with water, there are many places within reach of Navy air and surface assets. Warships can converge off of a selected coastline from many locations. They can arrive prepared to do combat, sustain themselves, and provide their own air cover and aerial striking force (if an aircraft carrier is included in the force structure). In some areas of the world where the United States has no forward basing rights, a ship may be the only method of placing American military presence on the scene for an extended

period of time. Since the American Navy is forward deployed world-wide, it is conceivably within fourteen days sailing time from any coastline (20 knots X 24 hours X 14 days = 6720nm). If the forward basing rights the U. S. has in the Philippines are not renewed, and it does not gain other bases nearby, or passage through the Suez Canal is denied to us, even the Navy will have a difficult time responding promptly with reinforcements to a crisis in South Asia. It is important to remember that good intelligence would enable naval forces to be in an area before a crisis begins.

As self contained instruments of force projection they have no equal.

For most of U. S. history the Navy was the only military instrument that could be used for these purposes - there were no or few forces abroad, and the rapid movement of land based forces was impossible. As a consequence the Navy, far more than the other two military services, has come to think of its employment for political objectives as one of its principal missions ("show-the-flag," "presence," "crisis diplomacy"), and has incorporated certain measures in the design of its forces which enable it to perform better in such operations - for example, the construction of underway support ships, which permit operations in regions remote from bases.⁴²

Battleships carry their own weapons loadout which can be tailored to combat in a specific region. After arriving in the zone of contention with a normal combat loadout,

a warship could be resupplied with a new weapons suite and remain on station as directed. A SEAL team or amphibious forces may be required. With the addition of an aircraft carrier battle group, the Navy has the unique capability of projecting power over a wide area with devastating effectiveness. Since I am not addressing the employment of naval forces in a general war with the Soviet Union, battle groups should be able to operate close in (within 50-100 nm from shore for a carrier battle group) because of the lower threat represented by a Third World nation. Conceding the point that airpower cannot win a war, naval airpower can certainly make a statement of our intentions! It can turn the tide of battle or local public opinion in our favor. Additionally, battleships, ASW forces, and amphibious units can carry out any other specific naval missions which might be required. Naval forces can readily support Special Operations Forces whose assignment might require deployment to a remote location.

Since nobody owns the oceans, no country can tell a US warship where it can and cannot go as long as it remains in international waters. Permission is not necessary to transit international waters. Even then it requires force to back up anti-American rhetoric. The

oceans are international highways for ally and adversary. Since no Third World country possesses a powerful open ocean navy, they probably will not be able to challenge the United States Navy beyond local coastal waters. The Navy could be challenged around chokepoints and in confined areas like the Persian Gulf by large numbers of unsophisticated patrol craft armed with simple surface-to-surface missiles. But even these forces (which the Navy has always had the capability to eliminate) are no match for a battle group with its sophisticated array of modern weaponry. This is not to say that U. S. aircraft or ships will not take hits or suffer casualties and this may well be a consideration when deploying forces. If the object of the naval diplomacy is to exert force and suffer no casualties, the battle group will have to tailor operations to that end and perhaps use long-range naval gunfire, air-to-surface standoff weapons, or surface-to-surface guided missiles to neutralize the threat or "carry the message."

American naval vessels, warship and auxiliary, are deployed around the world sometimes just to be seen. They represent the nation and, in this day and age, a deterrent to limited and general war. As a deterrent, they have failed in their mission if they

are ever used in combat. That would indicate that an adversary does not believe in our resolve to use force when necessary. Obviously, recent past events have demonstrated that the leadership of some Third World countries believed we wouldn't use that force. Decisive action, both diplomatic and military, serves to maintain both our prestige and influence around the world. Prestige and power are as important to the Third World as they are to us. They would like to be associated with a winner.

By using military force when provoked (backed into a corner) or as a last resort, President Reagan has demonstrated that the United States is not afraid to use the power it possesses. The willingness to use force is as important as the successful use of that force. Conversely, our military leadership must realize that force is not a cure-all for what ails the world and they should be willing to tell the President when a mission is ill-advised or not possible with the forces or time available. Their mindset must shift from, "a can-do attitude," to thinking about whether force is the only alternative to consider. If past records are any indication, this change is not apt to happen in the near future.

Around the world the forces of the United States Navy deploy and maintain a rather tenuous presence. This is especially true of the aircraft carrier battle groups. As stated previously, it may not always be necessary for carriers to be the instruments of naval diplomacy even in such visible and sensitive areas as the northern rim of Africa. If shore bombardment in support of a Marine amphibious landing is the assigned mission, then a battleship accompanied by several Aegis cruisers and frigates may be able to accomplish the task. This would make the carrier forces available for other assignments.⁴³ Carriers normally deployed to the Sixth Fleet area of operations will always be available to provide the necessary offensive and defensive air cover when required by a surface action group. Until then, an Aegis cruiser and its accompanying escorts could certainly protect the battle group against the threat of a surprise attack from a Third World air or naval force.

Recent events off Libya, however, demonstrate that if the margin of technical superiority is sufficiently great, a first class navy should have little difficulty in "punishing" even quite a superficially strong littoral state.⁴⁴

In-port visits are another way to show our commitment to friendly nations. An aircraft carrier is an impressive visitor but it requires a deep water

port. If deep water is not available, perhaps a visit by a surface combatant would be possible. A battle group can maneuver within sight of a possible antagonist to serve as a warning or remain invisible over the horizon, but still ready if the antagonist decides to call our bluff. Single vessels can be dispatched for coastal patrols or even to visit friendly ports. "Evidently, navies can be used in many ways to convey messages and influence events."⁴⁵ Additionally, American naval forces have proven they can stay at sea near troubled areas for long periods of time. In fact, they are designed to do just that.

There are some limitations faced by naval power when dealing with Third World countries. The American Navy is flexible but stretched thin to maintain all of its commitments. Future lean defense budgets may leave the Navy unable to meet all projected worldwide requirements. Personnel caps or a decrease in operational and maintenance funding could have a detrimental effect on naval force posture. In January 1988 the Navy began considering the early decommissioning or temporary mothballing of 16 warships including the 10 ship class of Garcia frigates and the 6 ship class of Brooke guided missile frigates. The Navy officially stated it didn't have the manpower or

the money to keep these ships in service due to congressional budget cuts from which the Navy had to absorb 11 billion dollars in 1989.⁴⁶ This action would result in fewer men and ships to undertake the same worldwide commitments. It would also prevent the Navy from reaching its immediate goal of a 600 ship force. The upshot of the argument which ensued over this unexpected reduction in force was that the Secretary of the Navy, James Webb, resigned. He did not believe it was necessary to remove the ships from active service nor could he support a policy which did. He felt that cuts should be made elsewhere in the defense budget, an idea that the Secretary of Defense, Frank Carlucci, did not agree with.

As the age of the combatants increases, they may be spending less time underway and more time in port as operating and maintenance costs rise. Unless already on station in the vicinity, it takes time to move a battle group. The Navy has to be in the right place at the right time to be effective.

Additionally, the inhabitants of a Third World country may not show concern that a naval force is massed off their coast. Loud rhetoric and world-wide media coverage may shift the attention to the American presence off-shore instead of to Third World

transgressions. Some belligerents may not be intimidated at all. The world press corps is quick to publicize American intervention in a "civil war" or instances of artillery or aircraft-delivered ordnance falling on non-military targets. The PLO and the Shiite Moslems in Beirut didn't throw their hands up in surrender when the Sixth Fleet appeared off the Lebanese coast. The 16-inch guns of the USS New Jersey and the American air strike didn't appear to dampen their spirits either. At the same time on the international scene, it was asked why the great technological might of the U. S. Navy was necessary to crush a few snipers and then failed to hit the correct target. Additionally, why were two aircraft lost in an airstrike similar to the type the Israeli Air Force routinely performs without any casualties? I contend that the shelling by the USS New Jersey was a tactical, military misuse of the available naval power - a lethal weapon, incorrectly used. The rounds were not controlled by forward artillery observers (because there was no safe location to observe from); they fell off target in the wrong neighborhood, and subsequently killed innocent civilians. The airstrike was a political misuse of naval airpower because Washington dictated at what time of day the strike would occur and

eliminated the element of tactical surprise necessary for a successful operation. In addition, the targets just were not worth the price paid.⁴² The Joint Chiefs may have made a mistake in advising the president concerning these punitive uses of naval power. Conversely, the successful American strike on Libyan targets in April 1986 seems to have silenced (at least temporarily) the voice of Mr. Qaddafi. By and large, Third World belligerents seem bombastically unimpressed by American military might until it drops in on them and prevents them from doing as they please.

VI. Future U. S. Combat Operations in the Third World.

A conflict between a Third World country and the United States will (probably) not be a "total war" from our perspective. Undoubtedly, a smaller Third World country might view the conflict as a "total war". Will the United States wage total war with limited objectives, a limited war with clear objectives, a limited war to "stop the spread of communism," or maybe a limited war to support a Third World ally? Easy victories are not often achieved and we should remember that Third World countries do not always act as we expect them to:

Small countries are sometimes more single-minded and more ready to run risks, whether as victims or assailants. If you have only one enemy, and one kind of conflict to fear, you may be able to afford a luxury beyond the reach of a great naval power: to commit the whole of your strength.⁴⁸

A poor, underdeveloped Third World country, bolstered by a large input of Soviet military hardware or Cuban "advisors," would have nothing to lose in a shooting war with the United States and everything to gain in prestige from its neighbors or other similar nations. The United States is supposed to win wars with smaller countries. It is the big country with the powerful, technologically advanced military forces. A confrontation with America can unify a smaller country

against the threat, increase nationalism, and direct attention away from other serious, domestic problems. If America withdraws its forces early, does not honor commitments, or suffers temporary military setbacks that lead to victory (maybe by default) for a Third World country, it loses prestige and credibility in the rest of the world.

Regardless of past failures, the United States must continue to try to take what it considers the "right action" when dealing with a Third World nation. A small nation wins even when it loses in a "disagreement" with the United States. They will earn the respect of other smaller nations just because they had the courage to stand up to the U. S. Within the confines of our democracy the use of force is deplored as an instrument of American foreign policy. It may have to remain the option of last resort to the President, but it must remain a viable, effective option to him. Throughout our history presidents have depended on the Navy and aircraft carriers to project power and "show the flag" around the world.

Limited naval force has many advantages. It can be threatened without commitment, and can even be used on a basis of limited liability which is difficult for soldiers to manage. Warships can assemble on the high seas; they can wait and loom. If they have to take action, they are easier to withdraw, no matter what the outcome.

Limited naval force is an appropriate instrument in only a few international disputes. When it is available, however, it offers a particular application of force that can be both more economical and more controllable than other varieties.⁴⁹

According to Navy analyses, carrier battle groups participated in 35 of 51 international incidents (69%) to which the U. S. Navy responded between January 1976 and July 1985. Of these CV/CVN responses, 27 (63%) occurred during the Reagan administration, compared to 13 (27%) during the 1976-80 period. Most of the carrier force responses were in conjunction with incidents in North Africa and the Middle East, and the Indian Ocean-Persian Gulf region.⁵⁰

In order to maintain the 15 carrier battle group level which the Navy has determined to be the minimum to meet current and projected threats, Congress must provide the advance lead time funding to build new carriers. The four Forrestal class carriers will be 45 years old in the year 2000 and the Kittyhawk class will be 35 years old. The Forrestal and her sister carriers cannot be expected to last a great deal longer. The Navy will need to begin building 5 more Nimitz (or follow on) class carriers before the year 2000 just to replace the aging carriers and maintain the force level at 15. That funding is not obligated yet.⁵¹ More numbers of smaller, less capable ships, other than carriers, are not the answer. They cannot sustain themselves as readily, project as much power "over the beach," or protect themselves adequately

against both future Soviet or Soviet-equipped Third world threats. Advanced fighter aircraft from the carrier are part of a layered, defensive shield around the entire battlegroup. This shield enables the carrier to launch a mix of advanced attack aircraft, in all weather conditions, to project power inland and protect surface vessels providing naval gunfire in support of ground forces ashore. Large deck carriers are the only air-capable vessels that can perform both tasks simultaneously.

Additionally, the men required to man these carriers and their support ships must come from a projected shrinking pool of young manpower in the future from which all services will be competing. Considerable forethought must be given to the source and rationale for the funding and the manpower. Should we build more ships, acquire more forward bases, or retreat to our own shores? What program, if any, will the Department of Defense sacrifice (or cut back) to keep the Navy at a 15 carrier force level? As mentioned previously, the resignation of James Webb as Secretary of the Navy is an indicator of the serious disagreements within the Department of Defense concerning exactly what the force structure of tomorrow's Navy should be. Doing more with less takes

its toll rapidly on men and equipment. If action isn't taken soon, the Navy will be unable to respond at the turn of the century when the President asks, "Where are the carriers?"⁵²

VII. Conclusion.

American military force, specifically American naval force, can be used as one alternative in dealing with the problem of belligerent Third World countries. In this case, the Navy's mission is threefold: to assist weaker Third World countries in their own defense; to deter potential adversaries; and lastly, to punish aggression. Their remote locations make naval forces particularly useful in dealing with them. It will continue to be an important tool with which to counter Soviet expansionism in the Third World.⁵³ American naval presence can deny or inhibit the growth of Soviet spheres of influence. Rapid and decisive use of on-station American naval forces, when the United States is confronted with a problem that may be resolved by the use of force, is in the best interest of the United States. Sometimes a display of strength and determination is the only way to make an adversary see the error of his ways.

Future combat operations in the Third World will require joint operations by American forces. There will be joint operations at the battle front and in the rear areas. If suitable, nearby, friendly bases are available, the Air Force can greatly assist in tactical and logistical air support. Rapid, airborne logistics

support will be essential. A Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) may be able to deploy with its own inherent air support. Marine strike forces will eventually need relief from the Army if a peacekeeping force is necessary.

The often dictatorial leadership in Third World emerging or developing countries is new to the international political arena and they may not understand the limits of behavior that the rest of the world will tolerate. No nation should be permitted to terrorize its neighbors or hold any other nation hostage just because it claims to be from the downtrodden masses exploited by Western capitalists. To further the cause of democracy around the globe, the United States may have to assume the role of a world wide naval policeman by default. It has the only navy capable of doing the job! If we don't look after world stability as a whole, or at least in the areas we can make a difference, we may forfeit the job to the Soviets or, worse, allow the Third World to destroy itself by intra-regional conflicts. I think the population of the Third World deserves something better than domination, war, and starvation. The application of military force is not the only solution, but one of many which must be considered when dealing with Third

World countries. If not considered in the context of a well-defined national security policy, it may create more problems than it solves. The United States might learn from its own and past Soviet failures the limit of a great power's capabilities and responsibilities. Short of outright military intervention, which can only be successfully undertaken under very limited circumstances, the use of military persuasion is much less effective than political or economic measures. The United States is a great power, but it is subject to more self-imposed political constraints on the use of its military forces than the Soviet Union. It should, therefore, give priority or at least special consideration to the use of economic measures instead of military force in the Third World.⁵⁴

Military force can never be a substitute for both diplomacy and a sound foreign policy. The effect of using discrete military force tends to be short-term at best. Used in specific instances, the Navy can be useful in obtaining well defined political objectives serving "mainly to delay unwanted developments abroad".⁵⁵ It can't replace "diplomacy, close economic and cultural relations, an affinity of mutual interests and perceptions."⁵⁶ The application of military force in peacetime is seldom a solution to the problem unto

itself. It is an available option to buy time so that more effective policies can be implemented in the long term. Military force has been more successful when used to encourage an ally or adversary to continue doing something they are already doing (for example, leaving their neighbor states alone) rather than forcing them to do something else.⁵⁷

Having successfully used force once in a region, we must be ready to use it again to maintain national credibility. The United States needs friends in the Third World. Not all Third World countries need to be intimidated, coerced or led by the hand. The United States must stand ready to protect its interests and, when it is feasible, the interests and democratic rights of the nations of the Third World against the forces of totalitarianism.

The superpowers will, however, continue to reign supreme in the area of what Luttwak calls 'naval suasion'. They, especially the Americans, will use navies to compel smaller nations to do something, to make them desist from some activity, or to deter them from carrying out certain actions contrary to the economic and/or political interests of themselves and their clients. A relatively small group of medium powers, some on the upward slope, some on the down, will attempt with considerably more difficulty to act as assailants in exercises of limited naval force: with more success some may play parts in superpower confrontations. A mass of medium and small states will have the motivation and means to defend, or assert, their growing sovereignty in their offshore zones of

control and responsibility. Nevertheless, the smaller states will remain the targets of naval diplomacy, rather than the active practitioners.⁵⁸

The United States Navy is the best structured of the four services for U. S. military diplomacy and power projection to remote Third World nations with an ocean border. Problems will continue to arise within these countries that will have a profound effect on both regional and world stability. Strong leaders will direct their populations into unjust or unwise conflicts with their neighboring Third World states. Totalitarian regimes in remote areas of the world will seek greater power and more territory and there will always be those either afraid or unable to oppose them. The Soviet Union, internal conditions permitting, may continue to pursue any inroad possible to exert influence on Third World aligned and non-aligned nations. Only one nation has the capability to counter all these threats to freedom and stability. The United States and its Navy, forward deployed worldwide, offer the best opportunity for the maintenance of peace in the Third World and the defense of our interests as well as their own.

FOOTNOTES

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