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U.S. Maritime Strategy In A Post-Cold War World?

A Monograph
by

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ABSTRACT

U.S. MARITIME STRATEGY IN A POST-COLD WAR WORLD by LtCol Douglas O. Hendricks, USMC, 47 pages.

This monograph examines the impact of future U.S. military force reductions in Europe upon the Maritime Component of U.S. National Military Strategy. A chain reaction of historic events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has dramatically altered the strategic paradigm of East-West relationships. If the Cold War is over, as many pundits and policymakers would argue, then a major strategic reassessment is in order. This research attempts to define those key tenets of America's current maritime strategy which will have continuing relevance in a changing geopolitical environment.

The monograph lays the theoretical and historical foundations of U.S. maritime strategy as currently written. It also discusses the forces of change which are driving troop reductions in Europe. The U.S. maritime strategy is one element of a national security strategy based on deterrence, forward defense and alliance solidarity. American defense policy has been focused toward the Soviet Union for over 40 years, and logically the Maritime Component of U.S. National Military Strategy has evolved to meet this threat.

The heart of the monograph is the analysis of the changing European strategic paradigm and geopolitical situation to determine if the four basic tenets of the current maritime strategy are still valid. The paper concludes that a major strategic review is in order. Reductions of military forces in Europe will not only increase the role and importance of the Maritime Component of our National Military Strategy, but may require major changes in the way we structure, equip and define our maritime forces.

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I. Introduction

The job of the American military strategist has become decidedly more interesting during the last year. The dangerous, but predictable bipolar, Cold War world in which the East-West squared off across an iron curtain has been dramatically transformed. A chain reaction of historic events in Eastern Europe, within the Soviet Union and around the world has seriously altered the strategic paradigm. The collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe has stunned and excited the free world. Some analysts are claiming that the Warsaw Pact has become an historic footnote. Several members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) are demanding the removal of Soviet troops from their territory. Many are aggressively seeking closer relations with their capitalist neighbors. The first trainloads of nervous Soviet troops are slowly chugging East into an unknown future.

If the Warsaw Pact is no longer a threat, then why not disband the North Atlantic Treaty Organization? Ronald Steel recently wrote: "The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance which has rested for 40 years on Soviet obduracy, European dependency, and American prosperity is struggling to define its relevance."[1] Many pundits are arguing that NATO is no longer required to provide security. They are loudly praising President

Mikhail Gorbachev's role in the democratization of Eastern Europe. Others, such as former Assistant Secretary of Defense, Richard Perle, argue that the future of NATO is not bright, because, as the military threat that gave birth to the alliance declines, the political differences between members will degrade cohesion.2

Politicians in the United States and Europe want to realize a "peace dividend" immediately. Budget woes are a universal concern on both sides of a crumbling iron curtain, and would be greatly ameliorated by cutting defense spending. The process has begun in earnest. In March, 1989, Conventional Armed Forces Europe (CFE) negotiations began in Vienna, Austria.[3] The principle negotiating objective of CFE is eliminating, as a matter of priority, the capability for launching surprise attack and for initiating large-scale offensive action. The methods to be applied encompass reductions, limitations, redeployment provisions, equal ceilings and others.[4] CFE negotiations will undoubtedly result in massive cuts in troops, weapons and equipment in Europe. Clearly, there will be a substantial reduction of U.S. and Soviet military presence and influence in Central Europe in the years ahead.

The scope of U.S. military force cuts to NATO has ignited the most vociferous national security policy debate since the end of World War II. Calls for massive defense spending cuts echo in the halls of Congress and across the

country. William Kaufman of the Brookings Institute raised the blood pressure of Pentagon budgeteers when he published advice on how to "cut military spending in half by 1999."[5] Our nation's budget woes in recent years make even the most uninformed and simplistic solutions attractive to an electorate tired of funding the world's largest deficit.

The budget deficit plus dynamic changes in East-West relationships, CFE negotiations and the probable impact on U.S. military force levels have led U.S. military strategic planners to begin a critical strategic review. Military strategy must support national strategy and comply with national policy while at the same time national policy is influenced by the capabilities and limitations of military strategy.[6] Put simply, the international environment is changing at tremendous speed and those charged with protecting the security of our democracy must ensure that U.S. national military strategy changes accordingly, so that the objectives of our national policy continue to be met.

Military strategists seek to balance military objectives (ENDS), the formulation of military strategic concepts to accomplish those objectives (WAYS), and the use of military resources (MEANS) to implement the concepts.[7] The difficult question for strategic planners is how to achieve this balance. Vital national interests and objectives are easy enough to establish, but agreement on how to achieve those interests is difficult. Moreover,

national military strategy is by nature transitional and thus requires constant revision.

The goal of this research will be to examine the Maritime Component of the United States National Military Strategy within the context of the changing geopolitical paradigm in Europe. The basic question is: How will future U.S. military force reductions in Europe impact upon the Maritime Component of our National Military Strategy?

To answer the research question, I will begin by looking at the theoretical underpinnings of the current U.S. Maritime Strategy. After establishing its role as part of the national military strategy, I will examine the origins of today's maritime strategy. While America has always been a maritime nation due to geographic and economic necessity, the formal recognition of a "Maritime Component" of U.S. National Military Strategy is relatively new. I will introduce three important naval strategists whose theoretical concepts shaped the development of American naval thought during the 20th century.

Secondly, I will look briefly at the historical development of sea power in America from its conception during the American Revolution through its rejuvenation under the Reagan administration in the 1980's. We will look at the evolutionary process of the current version of the Maritime Component of the U.S. National Military Strategy. Geoffrey Till provides a cogent argument for including a

historic perspective to the study of sea power in his book, Maritime Strategy and the Nuclear Age:

> Many of the philosophers of sea power argued not only that sea power had an important influence on history but also the reverse. History, or at least the study of it, could have significant effect on sea power because it showed not only how important sea power was, and is, but also how it should be handled. Some of them looked to history for revealed truth.[8]

After reviewing the theoretical and historical foundation of the maritime component of U.S. military strategy, the stage will then be set to begin an analysis of the future validity of the U.S. maritime strategy. The goal of this section will be to answer the research question. Four key premises underpin the current maritime strategy:[9]

1) Deterrence
2) Forward Defense
3) Alliance Solidarity
4) Focused on Soviet Threat

These premises will become the criteria by which evidence is evaluated in attempting to answer the research question. If these basic tenets underpin a valid, existing maritime strategy, then analyzing their future viability against the changing European paradigm should provide logical insight. Put in simple terms, if the key premises underpinning U.S. maritime strategy are still valid in a world where U.S. military forces can be reduced in Europe, then the maritime

strategy should remain in effect as written. However, if the changing conditions impact sufficiently on these premises, then our maritime strategy must be reconsidered.

In the final sections of this paper, I will present possible implications for the future and the conclusions of my research. The answers are important if our maritime strategy is to continue supporting U.S. national military strategy, which in turn, ensures national policy objectives will be met.

II.

Theoretical Foundations of U.S. Maritime Strategy

The maritime strategy is one element of a national security strategy based on deterrence, forward defense and alliance solidarity.[10] Like the national security strategy it supports, the focus of U.S. maritime strategy has been oriented toward the Soviet Union. However, as Floyd D. Kennedy, a defense analyst, correctly points out, "the United States has had a maritime strategy since the birth of the nation. Most of the formal principles of today's maritime strategy have been refined during the 20th century, most by the end of World War II."[11]

It is imperative that we begin our analysis of the current maritime strategy by examining its theoretical foundations in American naval thought. Robert Seager II contends:

> That The Influence of Sea Power Upon History by Alfred Thayer Mahan, was perhaps the most powerful and influential book written by an American in America in the nineteenth century and had much to do with resurrecting the U.S. Navy from its post-Civil War grave and giving it the professional ballast and theoretical direction that helped guide it to victory in 1898, 1918 and 1945.[12]

Mahan developed two main themes in his attempts to demonstrate the relationship between sea power and national stature. First, he argued that,

> Seapower is an indispensable ingredient for national greatness. When properly used or understood, it can bring wealth and power. When improperly used or understood, it can bring national decline and a loss of temporal power and greatness.[13]

This theme was music to the ears of a leadership elite consumed with the spirit of America's manifest destiny. Mahan argued that England's wealth and power were a result of her gaining sea power and using it to her advantage.[14]

Mahan's second theme, borrowed from Clausewitzian theory, stressed the overriding importance of the political object that is achieved by naval warfare. The object of naval warfare is a function of national interests and national policy; it is an expression of political goals to be achieved by the employment of sea power generally and naval forces specifically.[15] Mahan concluded that the route to achieving the "object" lay in the destruction or neutralization of the enemy fleet.

In addition to Karl Von Clausewitz, Mahan was an ardent admirer of Antoine Henri de Jomini. Mahan borrowed extensively from his general principles of military strategy and attempted to apply them to fleet deployments and actions at sea.[16] Mahan advocated the building of capital ships to enable the U.S. Navy to project power beyond America's coastal waters. The ultimate goal of naval forces was to control the seas: the ability to use the seas for oneself while denying them to the enemy. To do this a nation must

possess a battlefleet, the ultimate key to naval success.[17] Publication of his theories in The Influence of Sea Power Upon History won Mahan fame around the world. However, despite the public acclaim, Mahan was not the only, or even the most insightful, naval theorist of his day.

Sir Julian S. Corbett, Britain's greatest maritime strategist, wrote Some Principles of Maritime Strategy in 1911.[18] This classic treatise has stood the test of time and technological innovation far better than Mahan's work. Corbett makes clear the necessary interaction and interdependence of sea and land aspects.

> Since men live upon the land and not the sea, great issues between nations at war have always been decided---except in the rarest cases---either by what your army can do against your enemy's territory and national life, or else by the fear of what the fleet makes it possible for your army to do.[19]

He goes on to say, "National strategy does not exist as a separate branch of knowledge. It is only a section of a division of the art of war."[20] Even the title, "The Maritime Component of the U.S. National Military Strategy," of today's U.S. maritime strategy reflects the persuasive influence of Corbett.

Like Mahan, Corbett was a student of classical military theory and history. His overall view of war and strategy shows a good grasp of the thought of Clausewitz and Jomini, and he sets out to show how maritime strategy could add a

new dimension to their essentially continental concepts.[21] In fact, both Mahan and Corbett were interested in applying the brilliant Clausewitzian analysis of military theory to naval and maritime matters.[22] Bernard Brodie wrote that "On War is not simply the greatest, but the only great book about war."[23] Corbett would probably agree since Clausewitzian thought pervades his naval theories.

Corbett stressed the importance of combined (joint) operations in war, whereby the navy must use its wide range of capabilities to bring pressure to bear on the enemy and to assist the work of the army to further the political objectives for which the war was being fought. He argued for balance in the appropriate use of armies and navies, pointing out that sea control alone failed to prevent Napoleon from becoming the master of Europe.[24]

Corbett agreed with Mahan that command of the sea was essential in war to control maritime communications, but that, "defeat the enemy's fleets as we may, he will be but little worse". He argued that destruction of the enemy navy is only a means to an end--not an end in itself as some naval enthusiasts of the day believed.[25]

While Mahan and Corbett are regarded as the classic naval theorists who may have had the greatest influence on political policy makers in the early 20th century, other serious strategic thinkers have added to the body of naval theory. The intellectual task of clarifying naval aspects

of military theory was continued by a distinguished group of naval thinkers, among them a brilliant scholar, teacher and theorist, Herbert Rosinski. A faculty member of the German Naval Staff College, he fled Nazi persecution in 1936 and arrived in the United States during the Second World War.[26]

Rosinski melded, interpreted and modernized the valid, but often confusing theoretical concepts of Mahan and Corbett. He bridged the gap between the period when Mahan and Corbett wrote at the turn of the century and the advent of nuclear weapons.[27] He applies the theoretical concepts introduced by Mahan and Corbett and validates them using the historic events of the world wars. He attempted to develop a comprehensive definition of strategy by building on some of the major points expressed by Mahan, Clausewitz and Corbett, and by stressing the idea of strategy as control.[28] Rosinski put forth a systematic analysis of the possible and probable functions of sea power in a future global conflict. His words encompassed a theme that would soon be reflected in the U.S. Navy's maritime strategy:

> The global balance of power, and with it the continued peace and prosperity of the world, depends ultimately upon the ability of the sea powers to uphold their end against the rising pressure of an unprecedented concentration of land force; and if, in the last resort their ability to hold their own in this gigantic tug-of-war depends in its turn upon their capacity to project their armed might across the intervening seas, then it is not too much to say that, sea power more than ever before holds the key to the balance, and with it the peace of the world.[29]

The Naval officers who developed the Maritime Component of U.S. National Military Strategy were schooled in the theory of Clausewitz, Mahan, Corbett and their interpreters, of whom Rosinski was but one.

A respected military theorist contends:

> Theory asserts nothing. It merely suggests. These suggestions, like stepping stones, provide a path that hopefully leads toward truth. But the journey is long and arduous; the path leads beyond the horizon; and final truth, like the rainbow's end, recedes as we draw near.[30]

Mahan, Corbett and Rosinski sought to explain their theoretical laws based on their interpretation of historic events. To fully appreciate the evolution of U.S. maritime strategy in its current context, we need to look briefly at the American naval experience.

III. Historical Background

> By maritime strategy we mean the principles which govern a war in which the sea is a substantial factor. Naval Strategy is but that part of it which determines the movements of the fleet when maritime strategy has determined what part the fleet must play in relation to the action of the land forces; for it scarcely needs saying that it is almost impossible that a war can be decided by naval action alone.[31]

The maritime strategy proclaimed by the U.S. Navy in the 1980's was as much a "reaction to" as a "result of" U.S. Naval history. The maritime strategy document first published and approved in 1984 was founded on over two hundred years of trial and error.

The evolution of the U.S. maritime strategy began in 1775. George Washington requested the creation of a tiny Continental Navy and Marine Corps to harass British supply lines to Boston and thus, to support the continental army on land. Washington was to remark: "in any operation, and under all circumstances, a decisive naval superiority is to be considered as a fundamental principle, and the basis upon which every hope of success must ultimately depend."[32]

Utilizing today's terminology, the contribution of the maritime component to national military strategy during the American Revolution culminated during the American victory of Yorktown. The "alliance concept" of Washington's maritime strategy was just as important then as it is today. The French command of the sea in Virginia waters sealed the

fate of the British Empire in America. A French fleet under Admiral de Grasse helped bottle up 8,000 British troops commanded by General Cornwallis in Yorktown, while Generals Washington and Rochambeau reinforced a land attack against Yorktown being conducted by the Marquis de Lafayette . This maritime campaign ended America's first war.[33]

Considered an expendable luxury, the infant Navy/Marine team was disbanded after the American Revolution. By 1785, all U.S. warships that fought against Britain had been disposed of.[34] However, the growth of American global trade resulted in the recreation of the U.S. Navy in 1794, when attacks against merchant shipping led to a public outcry. A small fleet of warships was launched in 1796 to safeguard U.S. commercial interests. Nonetheless, the Congress refused to provide adequate resources to her Navy. In the War of 1812, a powerful British fleet was able to blockade the entire U.S. coast and conduct raids inland at will. On one such raid in 1814, the British burned the U.S. Capitol in Washington.[35]

Commerce protection was the primary role of naval forces until the Civil War in 1861. One notable exception took place during the Mexican-American War in 1847, when General Winfield Scott conducted the largest amphibious landing in American history to date. Scott landed over 12,000 soldiers, sailors and marines at Veracruz, Mexico in a matter of hours.[36] Within six months, his victorious army

was in Mexico City, the war successfully ended. A classic "joint operation", it must have made a lasting impression on a young lieutenant named U.S. Grant.

During the Civil War in 1863, General Grant conducted an amphibious operation at Vicksburg, Mississippi, which effectively split the Confederacy in half and sealed their fate.[37] The unique cooperation demonstrated between Grant's army and the Navy fleet under Admiral David Porter was the key to victory at Vicksburg and gave the Union undisputed control of the Mississippi, thereby completing the naval encirclement of the Confederacy. General Scott's maritime strategy (Anaconda Plan) brought the resource dependent Southern states to their knees.[38]

The Civil War period witnessed an unprecedented Navy shipbuilding program. By the end of the war, the Union had over 700 modern ships. Not only was this Navy large, but it was technologically advanced. But alas, by 1870 only 52 of these ships remained in commission.[39] The fortunes of the naval services reflected the general lack of concern for events external to U.S. shores. History would continue to repeat itself.

It was during these years that a young naval officer, named Mahan, began to formulate his ideas on sea power. Alfred Thayer Mahan and several other brilliant naval officers, like Admiral Luce, who would establish the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island in 1885, began planting

the seeds which would lead to a renaissance of American naval thought.[40] Mahan's lectures and books found an eager audience in a nation that was coming of age. Young Theodore Roosevelt, an Assistant Secretary of the Navy, became a mentor to Mahan and a proponent of Mahanian theory.[41]

The Spanish-American War of 1898 marked the entrance of the United States into great power competition. America would acquire an overseas empire. Puerto Rico, Guantanamo, Guam and the Philippine Islands were spoils of war that would embroil the United States in future conflict.[42]

The United States, under President Theodore Roosevelt, embarked on a shipbuilding program to attain a "navy second only to Britain's". The aggressive young president would use naval power as his "big stick" in foreign relations.[43] Influenced by Alfred Thayer Mahan, Roosevelt was to alter American naval history forever. America would begin to compete both economically and militarily with the major European powers. This competition would involve the nation in two world wars.

Both world wars saw the U.S. develop national military strategies with a strong maritime component. In each conflict in the twentieth century, America was afforded the time to build up the naval forces required by the nation's warfighting strategy.

The growth of the communist threat after World War II redefined the concept of national security strategy. In the

aftermath of World War II, the United States took on an unaccustomed burden: the responsibility to lead and help defend the world's free nations. The challenge of an aggressive, repressive Soviet Union was contained by a system of alliances, including NATO, which America helped create and lead.[44] It was during this post-World War II period when naval strategists began formulating a universally accepted maritime strategy for the nation. The saga of the Navy's struggle to win approval for its maritime strategy was an attempt to benefit from the lessons of American naval history.

The fight to win official acceptance of the maritime strategy, often referred to as the "Forward Maritime Strategy (FMS), lasted more than 10 years.[45] During this "confirmation process", a dynamic and heated public debate ensued. The U.S. Navy literally created a new bureaucratic infrastructure, applying its best minds to the developmental and marketing process of the maritime strategy.[46]

The appointment of Admiral Thomas B. Hayward as the 21st Chief of Naval Operations in June 1978, marked an important stage in the transition of thinking within the naval officer corps. Hayward established the Long Range Planning Group (OP-00X) under Rear Admiral C.R. Larson to assess resource limitations on future naval capabilities and analyze alternative strategies for achieving long-range goals. He established a prestigious Center for Naval Warfare Studies

at the Naval War College to further enhance strategic thinking within the Naval services. Finally, he created a small cell consisting of some of the "best and brightest" military officers in the nation which became known as the "CNO'S Strategic Studies Group".[47]

To make an interesting, but long story short, by 1983 these distinct, but mutually supporting strategic planning groups at the Naval War College and Navy Headquarters in Washington, developed a document called "The Maritime Strategy". This official statement of the new strategy was then briefed to groups interested in naval affairs around the globe in order to gain clarity of concepts and precision of phraseology.[48]

Distribution of "The Maritime Strategy" took place during the summer of 1984 as a classified document within the Navy. Distribution led to further debate and refinement of its basic tenets.

The Maritime Component of U.S. National Military Strategy that has evolved during the last decade is based on both U.S. and NATO defense principles. Those principles are: deterrence, forward defense, and alliance solidarity. The strategy prescribes aggressive forward operation of naval forces to complicate Soviet planning, ensure access to Eurasia, help cement alliances, deny the Soviets free access to the open oceans, provide useful offensive options to the

National Command Authorities (NCA), and protect the sea lines of communications (SLOCS).[49]

The maritime strategy is a dynamic, and complex concept consisting of a plethora of intertwined issues, premises and tenets. The constraints of this study require limiting the scope of analysis to four key "premises" inherent in the maritime strategy. The premises mentioned earlier will test possible answers to the basic research question.

The foundation of America's national military strategy, of which the U.S. maritime strategy is a key component, is the deterrence of war. Deterrence is not a difficult concept to define. It simply means convincing potential opponents that aggression is unlikely to be worth the potential cost. Deterrence in the maritime realm means deploying sufficient naval forces to project a credible response to any contingency. The goal is to be "ready" as well as "willing" to use force as necessary.[50]

The second basic premise is related to the first. Forces must defend forward if they are to effectively deter aggression. Forward presence of naval forces visibly demonstrates U.S. commitment to honor its alliances and partnership agreements.[51] If deterrence fails, then forward forces will be in position to quickly respond and thus, bring about satisfactory conflict resolution. Admiral James Watkins argued in his definitive treatise, "The Maritime Strategy", published in the January, 1986, Naval

Proceedings, that naval forces deployed forward in high states of readiness are the heart of U.S. crisis response:[52]

> -Navy and Marine Corps forces have been crisis responders in 80% of the military crisis situations since 1946.
>
> -Naval forces can be at the scene with short warning to conduct surveillance, threaten force or control the crisis before it gets out of hand.
>
> -Naval forces can be easily withdrawn and can provide sustainable escalation control.

The maritime strategy is a war fighting strategy. If deterrence fails, then forward deployed naval forces are capable of responding to the entire spectrum of conflict depicted in Figure 1.[53]

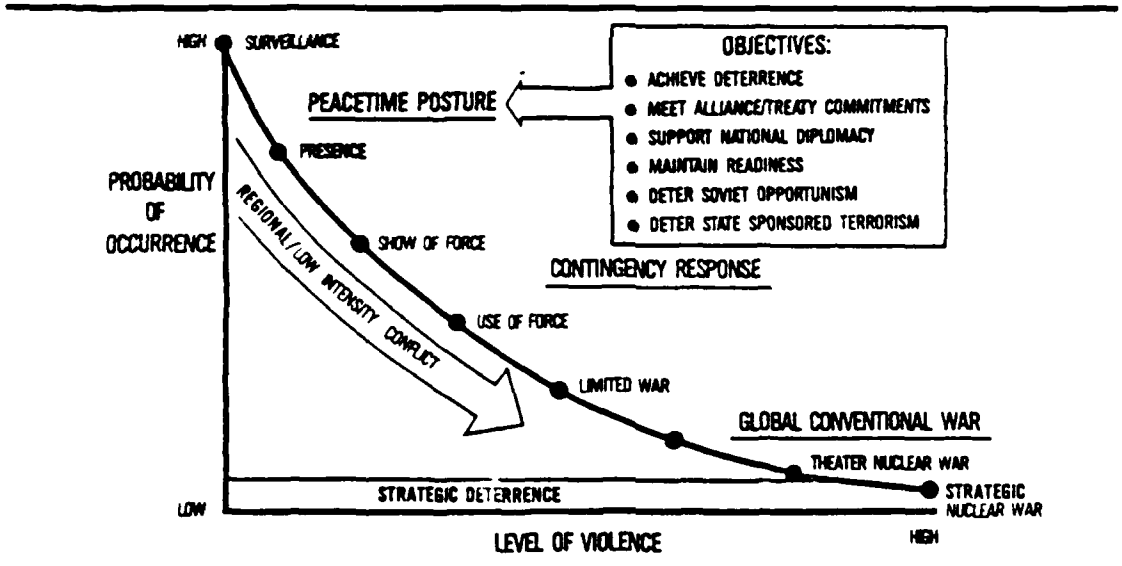

Figure 1

The ability to meet Soviet forces close to their homeland denies them freedom of action. Forward defense will provide

control of the seas and safeguard sea lines of communication (SLOCS), which are deemed essential for the reinforcement of allies.[54]

Alliance solidarity constitutes the third basic premise of U.S. maritime strategy. Once again, we derive this tenet from national military strategy which is "coalition" based. In addition to NATO, the U.S. has defense treaties with forty-three separate nations, and common military interests with many more.[55] Not surprisingly, NATO military strategy is consistent with U.S. national military strategy. In fact, NATO has adopted a strategy of deterrence through flexible response and forward defense which includes a NATO "Concept of Maritime Operations".[56] Both NATO and U.S. maritime strategies emphasize forward offensive operations if deterrence should fail. Thus, substantial U.S. naval forces are deployed in and around the European theater and/or would steam into position at the earliest possible phase of the crisis. With substantial quantities of equipment stationed forward, such as the Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) reinforcement package for Norway, and two additional Maritime Prepositioning Forces on station at sea, the maritime strategy is an effective counterpoint to Soviet strategy.

The fourth tenet of the maritime strategy is the strategy's focus against the Soviet Union. Not specifically addressed as a tenet in the strategy document, strategic

reality has made orientation on the Soviets a key premise nevertheless. Soviet military capabilities in both conventional and nuclear realms, along with Soviet threats of world domination, have dictated U.S. strategy for over 40 years. In virtually every measure of the Soviet military power, they have fielded weapons systems and forces that are intimidating. For example, the transformation of the Soviet Navy under Admiral Sergei Gorshkov in the past three decades from a largely irrelevant coastal defense force to a worthy adversary, has placed Western naval dominance in doubt. The rapidly growing size, technological capabilities and aggressiveness of the Red fleets have seriously challenged the ability of the U.S. Navy to ensure command of the sea.[57]

The maritime component of the national military strategy was written to specifically confront Soviet military strategy.[58] When the strategy was formulated and approved, the Soviet Union was the only nation on earth that could totally destroy Western civilization; they still are.

Thus far, we have attempted to establish the theoretical and historical context of U.S. maritime strategy. We have introduced four key premises that underpinned its construction and assisted in making it a viable component of our national military strategy. While the maritime strategy includes additional tenets or premises, the four discussed above are, in the author's view, the most important and warrant further study.

IV

Changing European Strategic Paradigm

> The difficulties experienced by contemporary societies which are militarily top-heavy merely repeat those which, in their time, affected Philip II's Spain, Nicholas II's Russia, and Hitler's Germany. A large military establishment may, like a great monument, look imposing to the impressionable observer, but if it is not resting upon a firm foundation (in this case, a productive national economy), it runs the risk of a future collapse.[59]

Extreme Soviet economic difficulties, related social problems and technological limitations are driving Soviet leaders to change the way they interact within the international community. Soviet military writings in the early 1980's began to reflect the idea that advanced technologies held more promise for enhancing military strength than did ever increasing force levels. They also admitted that the Soviet industrial base could not support a new revolution in weapon technology. Soviet allocation of finite resources to build increasingly large military forces overburdened an economy already suffering from the effects of inefficient central planning and agricultural incompetence.[60]

At about the same time, the United States led a NATO military revitalization drive that substantially increased the capabilities of U.S. and NATO forces. Mikhail Gorbachev was the first to recognize the negative impact of the

unbridled Soviet military buildup of the 1960's and 1970's. "Perestroika" (restructuring) was intended to enhance the productivity, efficiency, and the quality of economic output to reverse the long-term slide in economic growth rates.[61] Economic reform was not possible under the existing political system.

Gorbachev felt he needed to change the political relationships within Soviet society in order to make "perestroika" viable. He declared a policy of "glasnost" (openness), which unleashed a process of "democratization" that has literally changed the character of the state.[62] Tolerance of political diversity, greater personal freedom and the demise of the Communist Party's monopoly on power, set the stage for political ferment not only in the Soviet Union, but throughout Eastern Europe. Christopher Donnelly describes the effect:

> If current developments continue in Eastern Europe, the Warsaw Pact could cease to exist within a year. In place of the Warsaw Pact, Eastern Europe could become Finlandized.[63]

While Gorbachev's policies of "glasnost" and "perestroika" have unsettled the East European leadership, as well as old line power brokers within the Soviet Union, his impact in the West has been nearly as dramatic. The Soviet leader seized the initiative by convincing the European publics of his sincere desire to end the arms race, which threatens "our common European house". Despite the

warnings of a Soviet conspiracy to separate the United States from Europe, "Gorbymania" swept Western Europe.

The scope of this study does not permit an in-depth discussion of the road to Vienna, where in March of 1989, the NATO and Warsaw Pact security alliances began negotiations to reduce conventional forces in Europe. Suffice it to say, that in the year since CFE talks began, the negotiators have had to struggle to keep pace with the changing political realities. Force cut levels will be greater than originally anticipated and, quite frankly, will probably be made with or without a CFE agreement.

Soviet troops have already begun to depart Eastern Europe. Unilateral force cuts announced by President Gorbachev have NATO members scrambling to rework budget plans in order to bank their share of the peace dividend. Policy makers in the United States do not intend to get left behind. Typical sentiments:

> A significant reduction in U.S. force levels in Western Europe can now be made safely because the forces of the Warsaw Pact can no longer be relied on to join the Soviet Union in a cohesive attack on the West.[64]

Current CFE negotiations set a ceiling of 225,000 U.S. service members in Europe. Few people on either side of the Atlantic believe that the final number of U.S. military personnel in Europe will be even close to that ceiling by the mid-1990's. Ironically, some would say fortunately, the recent crack down by Gorbachev on the Lithuanian

secessionist movement has refocused attention on the critical importance of the CFE negotiations, and has resulted in a more realistic balance of cooperation and competition in superpower relations.[65] Reason has returned to the summitry process: the euphoria that was tempting unilateral defense cuts by NATO members has been tempered by the historic reality of communist oppression.

If the "epoch of the Cold War" is over, as was proclaimed at the Malta summit meeting between Presidents George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev in December, 1989, can NATO survive? This question is critical to a reassessment of U.S. maritime strategy. If a powerful Soviet Union led Warsaw Pact alliance is no longer a threat, and the NATO alliance, *which was created to counter that threat*, is an anachronism, then there should logically be no requirement to forward base U.S. forces in Europe. Consequently, U.S. national security strategy and its various components should then be reordered to reflect this new reality. The viability of the NATO alliance is at the heart of this study.

Events in Tiananmen Square clearly demonstrated the ease with which independence movements can be stifled by totalitarian regimes. Events currently taking place in Lithuania could turn back the clock on warming East-West relations if Soviet muscle flexing turns violent. NATO analysis confirms the fact that Soviet military nuclear and

conventional weapons have been modernized and substantially upgraded in recent years. Large forward-based stockpiles of fuel and ammunition are being maintained in Eastern block countries despite the withdrawal of some Soviet troops.[66] Despite optimistic hopes for a world in which security alliances would not be required, the NATO alliance appears to be alive and well. During a trip to Europe in March, 1990, the author repeatedly questioned the viability of NATO's future and was answered candidly by officials at several commands, levels of authority and nationalities. Almost every official confirmed the future need for NATO in one form or another. The name might change, but the basic security concept has provided the longest era of peace in European history. The fact that NATO has a political as well as military role, will ensure its viability for at least the next decade.

A strong supporter of NATO's continuing viability, President Bush has been the target of criticism for being timid and indecisive for not offering bold counters to Gorbachev's arms proposals. His "go slow" approach is now being praised as "wise and prudent".[67] President Bush set the tone for America's continued commitment to the NATO alliance when he recently wrote:

> Today, after four decades, the international landscape is marked by change that is breathtaking in its character, dimension, and pace. The familiar moorings of postwar security policy are being loosened by developments that were barely

> imagined years or even months ago. Yet our goals and interests remain constant. And, as we look toward-and hope for-a better tomorrow, we must also look to those elements of our past policy that have played a major role in bringing us to where we are today.[68]

Western Europe remains the largest single marketplace in the world, richer than the United States, richer than Japan. Some argue that by 1992, when the European Economic Community is combined with the improved economies of former Warsaw Pact countries, the importance of Europe in U.S. strategic analysis will increase.[69]

While the United States supports greater Western European economic and political integration, and will continue to provide leadership in the Atlantic Community to include military participation in NATO, it will undoubtedly reduce its military presence on European soil. The cost of maintaining bases and forces in Europe has been immense. Successful CFE negotiation is looked upon as a vehicle to help stem the flow of red ink. The ground swell in America to cut defense spending is growing exponentially. The final level of military force reductions in Europe will be contingent on Soviet behavior and the desire of the American people to ensure a balanced burden-sharing equation with wealthy Europeans.

United States military force reductions in Europe will have a pronounced impact on the maritime component of our national military strategy. If we review the four basic

tenets of the maritime strategy through the lens of the changing European paradigm, several issues surface.

Deterrence of war will continue to be the foundation of U.S. national security strategy. The maritime component of this strategy will assume a far more important role in deterring war in Europe once U.S. ground and air forces are brought home. Even if a CFE agreement increases warning time of a Soviet attack on Europe, the return of U.S. forces to Europe will require an extraordinary naval capability. Safeguarding the sea lines of communications (SLOCs) will become far more important than today. Soviet military doctrine currently calls for the rapid conventional defeat of NATO forces before a large-scale reinforcement from the United States could arrive.[70] Soviet perceptions that U.S. reinforcement efforts would deliver too little too late because of insufficient strategic lift or the inability to protect that lift, could make deterrence meaningless.

Therefore, forward defense by maritime forces will become even more crucial. Forward based naval intelligence collection facilities, aircraft, ships and submarines provide critical coverage in support of our national intelligence collection effort.[71] These efforts will take on added importance in a post-CFE environment, especially as mobilization and warning time become critical concerns.

While forward presence is a visible demonstration of U.S. political will to support allies and influence the

behavior of enemies in hopes of deterring aggression. It permits instant conflict resolution or containment should deterrence fail.

Meeting Soviet forces close to their homeland denies them freedom of action. It will be critical to bottle up or destroy the Soviet fleets so that they can not endanger the sea lines of communication--essential for reinforcement.[72] Two world wars have taught Americans the high price of keeping open the SLOCs to Europe.

Forward deployment of strategic nuclear forces is a bedrock of our deterrent strategy. As the most survivable element of the U.S. strategic nuclear triad, the Navy SSBN force provides the backdrop for all other activity in support of our national security.[73] Soviet attempts to engage the U.S. in naval arms negotiations are tacit recognition of the deterrent value of these forces.

Alliance solidarity will become increasingly vital to the effective implementation of our maritime strategy as U.S. forces in Europe are reduced. It may become the most critical tenet of NATO and U.S. maritime strategies. The problem of burden-sharing, the never ending debate on who should provide what to the common effort, has the potential to break the alliance. There are grave concerns in the U.S. that as Europe becomes more economically intertwined in 1992 they may forget the value of free trade.[74] Another problem facing NATO alliance solidarity is the reunification of the

Germanys. A single Germany could eventually become the economic heavyweight champion of Europe. The military and economic resources a united Germany would provide NATO is of grave concern to the Soviets. German reunification, more than any other issue, may determine the pace and scope of arms control with the Soviets in the next decade.

The fourth tenet of the maritime strategy we are reassessing in the context of U.S. military reductions is the strategy's focus on the Soviet threat. Despite the rhetoric, naval shipbuilding has shown no change under Gorbachev in terms of numbers produced or tonnage.[75] The complexity and quality of platforms and weapons systems being launched are only slightly less impressive than the incredible speed at which ships are being commissioned. By the year 2000, the Soviet Navy could have eight aircraft carriers at sea, including four of the 65,000 ton Tbilisi class, the first of which underwent sea trials in January 1990. These carriers are able to embark 60 plus aircraft to include the MIG 29.[76]

Few would dispute the fact that the Soviet Union is likely to remain, at least in the next decade, the military concern for U.S. military strategists. However, the rapid improvements made in Soviet defense industrial production and modernization over the past two decades have come at a heavy price. Paul Kennedy describes the problem facing the

Soviets (and the U.S.)in his book, The Rise and Fall of The Great Powers:

> the history of the past five hundred years of international rivalry demonstrates that military security alone is never enough. War or the very possibility of war makes establishment of a manufacturing power an indispensable requirement for a nation of the first rank... Yet by going to war, or by devoting a large share of the nation's manufacturing power to expenditures upon unproductive armaments, one runs the risk of eroding the national economic base, especially vis-a-vis states which are concentrating a greater share of their income on productive investment for long term growth.[77]

While U.S. maritime strategy in the future must continue to consider the capabilities of the Soviet military threat, it should not do so at the expense of other real threats to U.S. security. The likelihood of a nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union is not rational if Clausewitz was correct when he wrote, "War is a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means".[78] There can be no political gain worth the destruction of the whole society; thus direct armed aggression against another nuclear power is not a policy option. Both sides have known this for 45 years and relative peace has resulted.

U.S. military force reductions in Europe will impact upon the maritime component of our national military strategy in several ways. The easing of East-West tensions has refocused attention on the most likely threats to our nation's security. Since the end of the Viet Nam war, virtually all of the uniformed Americans killed in the

service of their country were participating in low-intensity and third world conflicts.[79] Lieutenant Neil Golightly captured the irony of our misguided strategic threat focus in his award winning Arleigh Burke essay when he wrote:

> While the Navy has been fighting what amounts to a tactical war in the Third World, U.S. strategic thinking has been confined by its institutionalized preoccupation with a traditional clash of arms between the great powers. The failure of U.S. strategy to provide conceptual and doctrinal support to its tactically engaged fleet means that U.S. responses to crises outside the set piece of NATO's Central Front have often been ad hoc, inappropriate, and ineffective.[80]

Golightly goes on to discuss American strategists' cultural predilection for the "Big Game" played by traditional rules requiring large teams, expensive and sophisticated equipment and resulting in massive firepower clashes. This cultural bias is supported by an "Iron Triangle" of military services, defense contractors and their congressional patrons.[81]

The changing European paradigm will require naval strategists to reconsider this fact. The national military strategy of the United States and its maritime component must be revised to reflect the most likely threats to American security interests of the future. These threats will probably come from the low end of the conflict spectrum depicted in Figure 1. Several strategic implications can be drawn from the above.

V. Implications

If the United States is to remain the world's premier superpower, it must maintain strong naval forces. The nation's security interests will depend more than ever upon our unhindered ability to participate in the peaceful international system of commerce built on global sea lines of communications (SLOC's).[82] The maritime strategy of tomorrow must change to meet the changing geopolitical reality of the 1990's. No one knows precisely what the world will be like in the years ahead, but we can be very sure that America's military role in NATO will decrease dramatically.

The U.S. maritime strategy's preoccupation with the Soviet threat is no longer a valid underpinning premise. Of course, U.S. maritime strategy must include a dynamic and viable, conventional and strategic nuclear deterrent vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, our future maritime strategy must change its focus to adequately address the growing threat from lethally armed Third World nations. This supposition provides maritime strategists a difficult problem because few new resources (MEANS) will be available to accomplish their desired objectives (ENDS). Difficult choices must be made because current naval force structure may no longer be appropriate.

Maritime forces built to defeat the Soviet Union in World War III are not the balanced force required to prevail in combat at the mid to low end of the conflict spectrum. Fiscal austerity will also place severe restrictions on forward deployed battle forces. Competition between the various naval warfare communities for limited resources is sure to accelerate. Already the decision to deactivate two Iowa class (BB-61) battleships, which were charged with providing Marine Corps amphibious assault forces with naval gunfire support, has Marines questioning the Navy's support for the amphibious assault mission.[83] The wrestling match over roles, missions, resources and priorities within the Department of the Navy has begun in earnest. The U.S. maritime strategy of the future is being debated all across the country as well as in Washington, D.C. .

A positive implication we can draw from the current strategic reassessment is that Americans have apparently learned from their mistakes after past conflicts. Few responsible defense policy makers are demanding a level of naval force reductions which would destroy the viability of the U.S. maritime strategy. Most American leaders agree with Defense Secretary Richard Cheney when he said:

> With a shrinking overseas base network and fewer nations willing to allow U.S. access to their facilities...the capabilities of our maritime power projection forces have become even more vital to our security.[84]

The painful lessons of history are all too fresh in the minds of America's leaders who lived through policy failures that preceded World War II and the Korean conflict when our military forces were neutered in an attempt to cut defense expenditures. As pointed out earlier, current U.S. maritime strategy is a product of extensive historic analysis and adaptation. It is a strategy that recognizes that there can be no substitute for naval forces that are versatile, flexible and posed to strike.

A final implication we can draw from the dynamics surrounding force reductions in Europe is the changing role of the United States in relation to our allies.

> The elements of our national power-diplomatic and political, economic and military-remain formidable. Yet, the relative importance of these different instruments of policy will change in changing circumstances. We are prepared to share more fully with our allies and friends the responsibilities of global leadership.[85]

The Western Alliance under America's leadership has won the Cold War, but the U.S. can no longer expect to dominate our allies both militarily and economically as in the past. While we seek healthy, cooperative and politically vigorous relations with our allies, we must seek a more balanced relationship. The maritime component of U.S. military strategy is ideally suited to facilitate improved relations. Many of the political pitfalls created by stationing forces on foreign soil can be avoided.

VI. Conclusion

U.S. military force reductions in Europe will substantially increase the role and importance of the Maritime Component of our National Military Strategy. The changing European geopolitical paradigm will have a global stratgegic impact. Extensive forward basing of U.S. military forces around the world will no longer be economically possible or politically desirable in what is becoming a multipolar world. Consequently, U.S. power projection forces, capable of sustaining themselves will logically be maritime in nature. The Navy/Marine Corps team will be extremely attractive to many as the premier rapid power projection force in future crisis action scenarios around the globe.[86]

However, timely deterrence of conflict in many instances may require a much larger force than a downsized Navy/Marine Corps team is able to project. Army expeditionary forces in the right power projection mix such as airborne and special forces, deploying via strategic airlift, where time is critical, may be the best strategic option.[87] It may also be time for the U.S. Army to rediscover their historic maritime skills. Sir Julian Corbett may have foretold the future when he wrote:

> Success will only come from the achievement of the balance and appropriate use of armies and navies.

> The most fruitful use of maritime power is in limited wars.[88]

U.S. maritime strategists must broaden their frame of reference when building force models to conduct maritime campaigns. Maritime strategy in the years ahead will be joint by necessity.

The U.S. maritime strategy of the future must continue to seek deterrence of war in close cooperation with allies who will be expected to assume greater responsibilities in our common defense.[89] In addition, our maritime strategy should shift its focus to adequately address the growing threat from increasingly well armed Third World threats.

Finally, the U.S. maritime strategy of the future must be affordable in an age of fiscal restraints. Paul Kennedy was right when he argued that too much defense may be as bad as too little. Selecting the right mix of maritime forces to implement our future maritime strategy will be critical. Balancing the competing demands for limited resources will require the best strategic thinkers in the nation to demonstrate the wisdom of Solomon.

If they do their work effectively, the maritime strategy of tomorrow will support a national military strategy which protects America's strong position as the world's beacon of democratic idealism. We must not miss the most important lesson of the Cold War's final campaign:

> The rebuilding of America's military strength during the past decade was an essential

underpinning to the positive change we now see in the international environment. Our challenge now is to adapt this strength to a grand strategy that looks beyond containment, and to ensure that our military power, and that of our allies and friends, is appropriate to the new and more complex opportunities and challenges before us.[90]

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