

MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

San Huntzman
~~THE PRESIDENT~~

FROM:

HENRY A. KISSINGER

SUBJECT:

Soviet Naval Threat in the Baltic and
North Seas

The annual appearance of Jane's Fighting Ships has attracted considerable media comment in recent years due to its prominent coverage of the Soviet naval expansion efforts. In late July, your News Summary briefed a CBS commentary on the 1971-1972 edition; allegedly, Jane's reported that the Soviets could "wipe out our land-based deterrent" in a first strike in the mid-seventies, and there was further editorializing that the Soviet Navy now dominates the Baltic and North Seas "and nary a NATO vessel seems in sight."

In the interests of accuracy, the actual Jane's account of the evolving strategic nuclear balance was not as lurid as depicted. In any event, this matter will be assessed in great detail during NSC addressal of the Strategic Posture and other studies in the near future.

With regard to the evolving naval situation in the Baltic and North Seas, some brief comments might be helpful in establishing a perspective since public attention hitherto has been focused on Soviet naval activity elsewhere.

At the outset, it should be noted that any assessment must consider two aspects of the present naval balance - the actual and the virtual - and place both in the context of our overall security interests.

- While the Soviet Baltic and Northern Fleets have not increased markedly in size during recent years, there has been heavy and sustained emphasis on modernization with new and converted units replacing the old. Their surface ships are shifting to surface-to-surface missile capability as well as surface-to-air; diesel submarines are being replaced with nuclear-propelled and a significant number are being equipped with cruise missiles capable of attacks on shipping as well as shore installations; and the associated land-

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based air units have improved their air-to-surface missile capability. Amphibious ships continue to be added at a slow but steady pace. In general, these new capabilities have not been matched by the pace of modernization in the NATO navies and there has been steady downward pressure on the size of most West European navies. These trend-lines are a major source of concern to Western naval observers.

- The popular perception of relative naval strengths has been influenced further by the accelerating pace of Pact naval activity over the last few years. Their naval exercises have become larger and more complex and have moved into NATO waters. Intelligence collection and surveillance activities have become increasingly pervasive. The number of transitors to the Mediterranean and elsewhere has increased and the newer Soviet ships are making more frequent port visits in Western Europe. This apparent dynamism has dramatized the Soviet naval presence whereas that of the NATO navies has been relatively low-keyed and generally taken for granted.

In the Baltic, it does seem clear that the Soviets have moved into a position of naval dominance. In the event of NATO-Pact hostilities, the Pact could probably gain early control of the inner Baltic although NATO has reasonable prospects of preventing egress of most of the Pact naval forces into the North Sea and beyond. However, the Pact has attained a significant amphibious capability which could be used in an attempt to seize the Baltic exits in conjunction with airborne forces or to conduct flanking operations to support an overland thrust across the North German Plain. Success in either of the latter two attempts would depend critically on the NATO air and ground forces that could be localized for defense.

The present naval balance in the North Sea is less clear cut and depends heavily on whether French naval forces would be committed in the event of NATO-Pact hostilities and, to an even greater degree, on the timely availability of US naval reinforcements. There would be a substantial Soviet submarine threat in the North Sea and the possibility of cruise missile attacks on key installations could not be excluded. There do seem to be reasonable prospects for containing the Soviet surface units to the Norwegian Sea; however, they would still be a significant threat to NATO

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reinforcement efforts in the event of a Soviet ground attack in northern Norway.

In short, the Soviet Baltic and Northern Fleets do pose significant and credible threats to NATO; and although the Soviets may not have yet attained the crossover point in the overall naval balance, they now have additional politico-military leverage at their disposal, particularly in Scandinavia where it would be a credible aim to induce a pro-Soviet drift on the part of Sweden and Finland and a weakening of Norwegian and Danish ties to NATO. Under these circumstances, the NATO naval presence assumes greater significance and should be sustained with NATO and national naval exercises and such measures to ensure demonstrable readiness as are feasible.

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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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ACTION
6 October 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER
FROM: R. O. WELANDER
SUBJECT: Soviet Naval Threat in Baltic and North Seas

Excellent paper
HK

Jon Huntsman has sent to you a memorandum concerning a report in the News Summary citing media reaction to the latest edition of Jane's Fighting Ships (Tab C). Huntsman's memorandum notes: "It was requested that you get the answer to this."

Each of the recent editions of Jane's has attracted considerable attention in the media due to the prominence given to the changing U.S.-Soviet naval balance. Early last fall USIA requested guidance in order to establish a policy line. I understand Wayne Smith provided you his analysis and perspective on the situation at that time.

In this instance, it should be noted at the outset that there is considerable disparity between what Jane's in fact says and what some sectors of the media says it says. The Summary item reports:

"This time, CBS notes that Jane's says that the Soviets by mid-seventies could wipe out our land-based deterrent in a first-strike."

The actual statement in the Foreword of Jane's (Tab B) is as follows (underlining is mine):

"In the strategic/nuclear balance of forces the USSR has gained superiority over the US in numbers of ICBMs and the megatonnage that can be delivered; and the current Soviet ballistic missile submarine construction rate of at least six submarines per year could give the USSR parity if not superiority in "Polaris" type submarines by 1975. (In addition to which the USSR has a number of nuclear powered and diesel-driven submarines with shorter-range missiles).

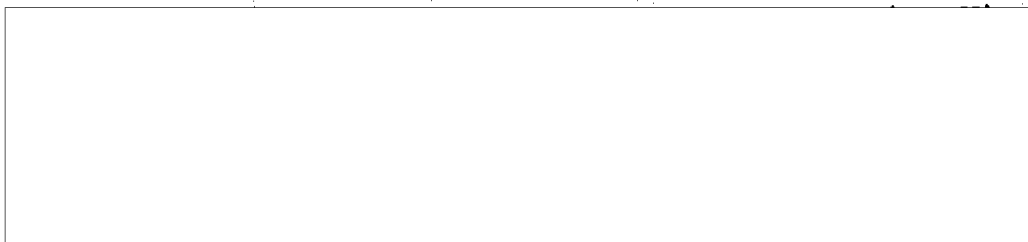


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41 Polaris/Poseidon submarines are acknowledged as the most survivable US strategic deterrent forces for the foreseeable future." S

I find little to quarrel with in the Jane's assessment; the CBS account thereof just did not set the full context.

The Summary item goes on:

"Then comes report on the Northern Flank of NATO where Soviets have turned the North Sea 'into a Soviet lake.' Alarming report on the networks, which says while US is watching Soviet thrust into the Med, no one seems to be paying great attention to the North and Baltic Seas where Soviets dominate and nary a NATO vessel seems in sight."

I cannot find these assertions in the Foreword or elsewhere in Jane's - nor any assessments therein which would lead to such judgements. Again, it is the CBS editorializing which is sounding the alarums.

Presumably, the Summary item piqued Presidential interest in two areas:

- The Soviet first-strike capability and
- The evolving naval balance in the Baltic and North Seas.

The first issue is to be addressed in great detail in the DPRC in the near future; it would be inappropriate to do so herein.

Therefore, this memorandum focuses on the second issue and provides a response to the President's request for an answer (Tab A).

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Constraints on Analysis

The Soviet Baltic and Northern Fleets, with their associated land-based air, constitute the primary naval threats in the Baltic and North Seas. While we have rather precise information on the composition of these forces and their unit capabilities, any gross numerical comparison with opposing NATO naval assets must be tempered by consideration of other factors.

On the Soviet side of the equation:

- The nominal threat to the North Sea is posed by the Northern Fleet which has many diverse wartime tasks in the Atlantic; the fraction of the total assets that could be concentrated in the North Sea would be highly scenario-dependent;
- Despite the real constraints of the Denmark Straits, the Baltic Fleet could also constitute a threat in the North Sea under many circumstances;
- Both Fleets contribute forces to the Mediterranean and elsewhere; residual strengths would depend upon the pre-hostilities Soviet posture;
- Both Fleets rely heavily upon the protection of land-based air, although major efforts are underway to improve integral air defense capability;
- The employment of both Fleets, but particularly the Baltic, would be influenced by the situation in the Central Region;
- The employment of the Baltic Fleet would be further influenced by the posture assumed by Sweden and, to a lesser extent, Finland.

On the NATO side of the equation:

- The initial role of the French Navy is questionable yet its assets would be significant in the North Sea as well as elsewhere in the Atlantic;
- The UK still maintains worldwide deployments and has major wartime commitments in the Mediterranean; assets available to counter a thrust into the North Sea would be scenario-dependent;

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- US naval assets that could be applied in either the Baltic or North Seas would depend heavily on the situation in the Mediterranean, along the trans-Atlantic SLOCs, and in the Pacific.

Situation in the Baltic

With the foregoing caveats in mind, the relative strength figures in Tables 1 and 2 may give some rough feel for the current situation in the Baltic.

It would seem clear that the riparian NATO states are pretty well outnumbered by the Soviets alone and even more so when the other Pact assets are put into the equation. Sweden's capacity for naval defense would appear to be short-lived.

Although the Soviet Baltic Fleet numbers have not changed appreciably in recent years, there has been a sustained emphasis on modernization with new or converted ships replacing older units. The growing SAM and SSM capability afloat is matched by extensive installation of coastal defense SSM batteries and it should be noted that the mine warfare and amphibious forces are now the largest of any of the Soviet fleets. Of perhaps equal importance to the perception of relative strength is the current tempo of Pact naval activity. Patrols in the Danish Straits and aerial reconnaissance are routinely maintained; foreign naval ships are surveilled continuously; and training activity remains high. Pact amphibious exercises have become increasingly complex and have incorporated airborne and tactical air elements.

One can only speculate on the psycho-political uses to which the Soviets will put this naval power in the years to come; the Fleet is clearly larger than necessary to ensure defense of the Pact Baltic coastline. On his recent trip through Scandinavia, Admiral Zumwalt sensed a drift away from neutrality toward a pro-Soviet stance on the part of Sweden as well as Finland and a weakening of Norway's NATO ties. Dependent as these countries are on seaborne commerce, they would appear vulnerable to combined Pact political and naval pressures and it would be a credible Soviet aim to induce a sense of isolation from Western Europe to achieve a pro-Soviet orientation in all of Scandinavia and, ultimately, the withdrawal of Norway from NATO.

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In a NATO war scenario, most assessments attribute the following missions to the Soviet Baltic Fleet:

- Destruction of NATO naval forces in the Baltic;
- Denial of ingress into the Baltic by external NATO naval forces;
- Seizure of the Baltic exits (Zealand, Jutland, and later Southern Norway) by amphibious and airborne operations to permit Soviet egress to the open oceans; and
- Leapfrogging amphibious operations to support land operations along the North German Plain.

The ability of the Soviets to carry out these missions would be heavily dependent on the air assets either side could apply - and this in turn would be dependent upon the situation in the Central Region and, to a lesser extent, northern Norway. The early availability of Swedish air bases to the Pact forces would be significant.

It seems evident that the Pact has the surface and air power to bring the naval battle well into the western Baltic soon after the commencement of hostilities. NATO naval reinforcement would become increasingly difficult as the scene of action moved up into the Danish Straits and there is a good probability that at an early juncture the only external NATO naval force that could be applied in the western Baltic would be carrier-based air from the North Sea or the Skaggerak.

While most analyses indicate that NATO has at least a reasonable chance of denying early egress of the Pact surface and submarine units, this should not be accepted as an end in itself.

To the extent that local air supremacy is gained and freedom of surface operations achieved inside Zealand, the Pact amphibious capability opens important options. They have the lift to assault land the two Soviet naval brigades (about 4,200 men and 60 tanks) and the Polish assault landing division (about 3,700 men and 60 tanks). This respectable assault force could be supported by the two Soviet airborne divisions (or one Soviet and one Polish) totalling an additional 13,000 men for which adequate air transport is immediately available. With a beach-head or port area seized, Pact merchant shipping in the Baltic could be mustered to administratively land up to an additional 5½ divisions.

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This capability could be applied in an attempt to seize control of the Baltic exits. Influencing factors would be the status of concurrent operations in Norway and the role played by Sweden. A concentrated Soviet Northern Fleet thrust into the North Sea to draw off NATO covering forces could not be excluded. If not committed to the Southern Flank, the ACE Mobile Force and NATO amphibious forces might be utilized to reinforce in Jutland, but otherwise there is little likely prospect for early ground or air reinforcement and the Danes would have their hands full unless well into mobilization.

In my view, a more likely exercise of this capability would be in support of a strong thrust along the North German Plain aimed at the Hamburg-Bremerhaven port complex. Countering such a force would require diversion of significant NATO ground and air assets which might be critical to containing the main overland thrust.

By their very nature, such amphibious assault operations would provide lucrative targets for the use of defensive tactical nuclear weapons. At what juncture such use would be feasible in the overall context of a NATO conflict scenario remains, at least to my mind, a moot question.

Some NATO studies postulate a surprise thrust to seize control of the Baltic exits from an advanced exercise posture of both the Soviet Baltic and Northern Fleets and their amphibious components. I would judge this highly unlikely but it raises interesting questions about the certainty of a full NATO response under conceivable sets of circumstances.

Situation in the North Sea

Tables 3 and 4 compare the Soviet Northern Fleet with the NATO navies that operate in the North Sea. UK and French strengths reflect ships normally operational in the Atlantic/North Sea and the maximum strength that could be concentrated if all assets were withdrawn from the Mediterranean. US strength shown is for LANTCOM at M+30 after augmentation by the Pacific Fleet in the Atlantic and Mediterranean.

In assessing the relevance of these figures, the following points are pertinent:

- The Soviet Fleet has a significant qualitative edge over most of the non-US NATO navies in terms of modernity, SAM capability, and its unmatched SSM and ASM capability. Operating under its umbrella of land-based air, it has a potency belied by its numbers.

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- Much of the NATO force of destroyer-size and below would be committed to ASW escort duty in the English Channel and Western Approaches in the event of hostilities or even during a crisis phase and would probably not be available for surface engagement. Conversely, most of the Soviet destroyers and escorts could be used to protect a surface strike force.
- The Soviet cruise missile capability has added a new dimension to the submarine threat to the NATO surface units.
- In addition to the uncertainty of their commitment, the French forces shown could be reduced in the event of concurrent hostilities in the Mediterranean.

The "sub-total" column is probably a good indicator of how the North Sea states view the naval balance and it is not particularly reassuring. Moreover, these are the NATO forces that initially would have to cope with the threat from the north as well as cover the Baltic exits. The US strengths shown can only be achieved over time; if there is a concurrent Mediterranean crisis, SIXTH Fleet reinforcement could well take priority and the initial capacity for allocation of major surface units to the north would be limited in what might be a critical period.

As in the Baltic, it seems clear that the present perception of relative strength has been influenced heavily by both the drive for modernity and the sustained high operating tempo on the Soviet side. While the Soviet Northern Fleet numbers have not changed markedly, new or converted ships with impressive SAM and SSM capability are replacing the old and the attack submarine force is shifting to nuclear propulsion and cruise missile capability. This stands in marked contrast to the drawdown in the UK fleet size and the generally slow pace of modernization in all the North Sea NATO navies.

The Soviets have been conducting increasingly larger and more complex fleet exercises which progressively move further south in the Norwegian Sea, and during OKEAN, there was a considerable presence in the North Sea for an extended period. Intelligence collectors roam the North Sea and NATO and national naval exercises are heavily surveilled by both air and surface units. Additionally, there has been the increasingly frequent transit of ships proceeding to and from the Mediterranean and elsewhere and now the newer Soviet units have recently begun making calls in the North Sea ports. In sum, the Soviet Navy has made the North Sea states keenly aware of its existence in the last few years.

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In this latter regard, the Soviet Baltic Fleet has also had units exercising in the North and Norwegian Seas and, on one occasion, sailed an amphibious force up the coast of Norway to participate in landing exercises in the north. From this, some observers have concluded that the Soviets may not consider the Baltic exits an insuperable wartime barrier. While not shown on Table 3, it should be understood that a significant portion of the Baltic Fleet could be put into the North Sea as a show of force during a localized crisis.

In the NATO war scenario, most assessments ascribe the following missions to the Soviet Northern Fleet:

- Covering and supporting ground operations to seize northern Norway to provide warm water ports and airfields to extend the radius of action into the northern Atlantic;
- Intensive ASW against NATO barrier submarines to facilitate transit to and from the Atlantic of their own submarine force;
- Intensive submarine warfare against all SLOCs into Western Europe;
- Destruction of NATO naval surface units to permit greater freedom of action against the North Atlantic SLOCs by their own surface forces.

Additionally, I would postulate the possibility of SSM strikes against key NATO maritime facilities such as those in Iceland, the Faeroes, and elsewhere.

The NATO naval strategy, in general terms, is to attrite the Soviet submarine force in the G-I-UK gap, to contain the surface threat to the northern reaches of the Norwegian Sea, and to conduct naval air and amphibious operations in defense of northern Norway. Defensive minefields would probably be laid to assist in containing both the submarine and surface units.

I have not seen any analyses of possible outcomes which are completely persuasive. Most are driven by how quickly we can cope with the preponderant Soviet submarine threat and this, in turn depends upon critical assumptions - technical, tactical, and scenario - on which there are diverging views.

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In my own view, we would be hard-pressed to hold northern Norway, particularly in the event of concurrent hostilities in the Central Region and on the Southern Flank.

The Soviets have an amphibious assault capability for landing one naval infantry brigade (2100 men and 30 tanks); airborne support could be rendered, depending upon the availability of air transport; and merchant shipping is available for administrative landing of up to 4 divisions of ground troops after seizure of a port. However, most analyses posit the major threat from mechanized divisions moving across the mutual boundary or through northern Finland or Sweden with the Fleet acting in a covering role.

The initial threat in the North Sea would be primarily from the Soviet submarines and land-based air with the possibility of cruise missile attacks on surface shipping and key shore installations. While the lower reaches of the North Sea are fairly shallow for optimum submarine operations, the importance of the coastal ports to Western Europe would warrant Soviet risk-taking.

Depending upon how the Norwegian campaign goes and the attrition of NATO surface strength from submarine and air attacks, the Soviet surface units could in time pose a direct threat in the North Sea; the severity of this threat would further depend on the degree to which NATO has retained air supremacy. In my view, this threat would be a long time in developing although a feint or an actual thrust to cover an attempted seizure of the Baltic exits could never be discounted.

Summary Conclusions

In the Baltic, it seems fair to say that the Soviets have attained a position of naval dominance with significant amphibious and airborne assault options. While there are fair prospects of containing this naval threat to the Baltic in event of NATO-wide hostilities, air and ground forces must be maintained to counter attempted seizure of the Baltic exits or flanking assaults into Schleswig-Holstein. The possible use of tactical nuclear weapons would have to be considered in a NATO-wide context.

In the North Sea, the naval balance has not yet shifted so dramatically. The main threat stems from the Soviet submarine strength and, to an increasing degree, from the Soviet cruise missile and ASM capability. Northern Norway does appear to be in considerable jeopardy. Major factors in the relative balance are the availability of the French Navy and the capability for timely reinforcement by the US Navy.

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Current perceptions of the relative naval balance in both the Baltic and North Seas are colored by:

- The sustained Soviet emphasis on modernization in both fleets which does not appear to be matched on the NATO side; and
- The upsurge in Soviet naval activity. Pervasive surveillance, out-of-area exercises, ship transits, and port calls - all of which have increased steadily in the short span of the last eight years - have dramatized the Soviet naval presence, particularly in the North Sea.

Any assessment of the significance of the evolving naval situation in the Baltic and North Seas is inevitably influenced by the primacy one accords the Central Region and one's judgment as to the rapidity with which a NATO-Pact conflict there would be resolved. At the least, it seems clear that the Soviet Baltic and Northern Fleets constitute significant and credible threats and provide the Soviets additional politico-military leverage in Scandinavia which could, over time, weaken or dissolve the Norwegian and Danish ties to NATO. In this latter context, it would appear important to sustain a countervailing naval presence with NATO and national exercises and by such symbolic means as the Standing Naval Force Atlantic, the multi-national destroyer squadron which periodically operates in the North Sea and conducts port visits.

Recommendation

That you sign the brief memorandum to the President at Tab A which reflects the foregoing conclusions.

Concur:

Hal Sonnenfeldt *HS / wa*

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1. National Intelligence Estimate 11-14-71, "Warsaw Pact Forces for Operations in Eurasia," dated 9 September 1971.
2. Joint Intelligence Estimate for Planning, Vol. III, FY 1972, SM 80-71.
3. Report of Interagency Working Group 5 for NSSM 84, "The Warsaw Pact Threat to NATO," SR JS-70 dated February 1970.
4. 25X1
5. Joint Strategic Objectives Plan, FY 1974-1981, Vol. I and Vol. II Book 5.
6. Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan for FY 1971, Vol. II (Forces).
7. 25X1
8.
9. NATO MC 161/71, "The Soviet Bloc Strength and Capabilities," dated 6 May 1971.
10. NATO Naval and Naval Air Intelligence Conference 1971, Agenda Item IV, "Trends and Developments in Warsaw Pact Naval Vessels," dated 1 September 1971.
11. Chief of Defence Norway - Ministry of Defense Germany, "Trends and Developments in Warsaw Pact Naval Operations and Exercises in the Baltic and the Approaches," dated 30 August 1971.
12. Ministry of Defense Germany, "Assessment of the Threat in the Area of Operations of the German Navy," dated 5 August 1971.
13. Chief of Defence Norway - "Soviet Naval and Naval Air Operations and Exercises in the North, dated 17 September 1970.
14. Chief of Defence Denmark, "Warsaw Pact Coastal Missile Order of Battle in the Baltic," dated 14 September 1970.

FOREWORD

Since last year's edition of this annual was published two factors have projected from the maritime defence concept which could influence the composition and deployment of many navies in the immediate future.

One is a somewhat belated but now acute awareness evinced by hitherto quite autonomous navies of the need for international co-operation and mutual security.

The other is the recognition, not only by major powers but also by smaller countries, of the tactical power and strategic influence of the fast and diminutive warship armed with the optimum payload of guided missiles.

Ironically it is the new world sea power of the Soviet Union which has engendered the yen for co-operation, and it is the Soviet Navy which has pointed the way to the ascendancy of the missile boat over much larger orthodox warships.

As regards international naval co-operation, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is, of course, now well established, and there is a Standing Naval Force Atlantic, a permanent, multi-national squadron, albeit not nearly as powerful as it could and should be; but there is no comparable multi-national naval force in the Indian Ocean.

Recently, however, there has been a change in the climate of opinion. From last year, when it seemed that few countries officially showed the slightest interest in the void created by a combination of the prospective withdrawal of British warships from the Far East and the preoccupation of United States naval forces in Vietnam and the Mediterranean: to this year when, not only several navies, but almost every thinking-ahead authority, is suggesting or formulating ways of filling the Indian Ocean gap from Cape Town to Singapore.

If the arms for South Africa controversy has done nothing else it has shed light on the problems of sustaining the European ocean trade routes round the Cape to India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Australasia, and has brought home to all countries on the Indian Ocean-seaboard the extent to which they are laid open to foreign maritime infiltration and influence.

The prime necessity would appear to be a multi-national Standing Naval Force East comprising warships seconded from each of the countries with military or commercial interests in that oceanic hemisphere from South Africa to Indonesia. Ideally this Standing Naval Force would include ships from U.S.A., Britain, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Singapore, Portugal and South Africa.

As regards the new era of guided missile boats in spite it is quite remarkable how many of the smaller countries as well as the major powers have seen the light and have taken up the small fast boat with the long-reach big-punch.

An alarming feature of the past decade has been the progressively increasing cost of fighting ships of the categories to be found in most navies: destroyers, frigates and escorts. When confronted with this escalation problem several of the smaller countries decided that the answer was smaller and cheaper vessels.

This policy was given impetus after the sinking of the Israeli destroyer *Eilat* by an Egyptian missile boat, and several western navies became aware of the possibilities of equipping small and fast vessels with modern guided missile systems for the surface-to-ship role.

Of particular interest are the missile boat flotillas created by Norway, which represent a considerable increase in the effectiveness of her navy. Adopting the indigenously designed "Penguin" system, four missile launchers are being installed in six new fast torpedo boats and six missile

launchers have been or will be installed in 20 existing fast gunboats in addition to their present armament.

Germany has also taken up guided missile boats in a very decided way. Abandoning what seemed to be a firm project to build four guided missile frigates of 3,500 tons, the German Navy is instead to build ten guided missile boats of 350 tons and 20 guided missile boats of 250 tons.

Among the other countries which have or are building missile boats are Denmark, Israel, Italy, Greece and Malaysia; and Algeria, China, Cuba, Egypt, Finland, East Germany, Indonesia, Poland, Romania, Syria and Yugoslavia, indeed most of the satellite countries who take their marine armaments from the Soviet Union.

Much the same as the submarine was in the past reckoned to be the weapon of the weaker power, so the diminutive missile boats with surface-to-surface systems will give smaller navies an offensive power out of all proportion to their modest overall size.

In fact, viz-a-viz a country with a much greater fleet of larger warships without missiles the smaller country with missile boats could hold the balance of deterrent power and exert a containing influence. And withal the missile boats are cheaper and quicker to build, easier to maintain and much more economical in manpower.

Yet there is seeming reluctance on the part of some of the larger maritime powers to build missile boats. The British Navy, for instance, has no missile boats and has not shown any inclination to operate such craft, although at the time of writing the Royal Navy is temporarily using the guided missile boat *Tenacity* built by Vosper Thornycroft. The two fast patrol boats of the "Brave" class have been laid up and Britain's representatives of the Coastal Forces are three new fast but unarmed training boats. However, these are eminently suitable for arming with missiles and doubtless would be if emergency required.

A great volume of new facts and figures and a large number of pictures have been added in this edition, the 74th year of issue of *Jane's Fighting Ships*. For the fourth successive year the Soviet section has been considerably enlarged and is now three times the size that it was in the late sixties, reflecting the growing size and power of the Soviet Navy. And the volume is again issued earlier in the year, the earliest publication date in the 23 years of the present editorship. More than 1,100 new illustrations have been added in this issue, including over 200 scale drawings. Altogether there are some 3,200 illustrations in the book comprising nearly 2,700 photographs and nearly 500 drawings. Particulars are given of over 15,000 ships and craft in 110 navies or sea-defence forces.

USA

Norman Polmar, editor and compiler of the American section, has given an outline of the American naval scene:

"The size and relative capabilities of the United States Navy continue to decline at what many authorities consider to be an alarming rate. This situation, hitherto discussed in closed sessions of naval officials and in this annual, is now being addressed openly. The Chief of Naval Operations has told Congress that the Navy has "a lower than prudent level of current forces" and has "been falling well behind a responsible replacement rate".

The force levels of the Fiscal Year 1972 budget reduce several categories of warships to their lowest strengths for over a decade. The situation is evident in the planned force of 13 attack aircraft carriers (one with a mixed attack/anti-submarine air wing) compared to 16 attack carriers three years ago; three anti-submarine carriers instead of

FOREWORD—continued

six in 1969; 160 cruisers, frigates (leaders) and destroyers decreased from 240; and 93 attack submarines, a drop of ten boats since 1969. The number of nuclear-powered attack (fleet) submarines has increased from 41 to 57 during the past three years, but this is limited compensation for the reduction in destroyer-type ships and ASW carriers with their air groups.

Despite the wind-down of the Vietnam War, the responsibilities of the US Navy remain. The Navy will long be engaged in supporting US and South Vietnamese forces on the Indochina peninsula; the "Nixon Doctrine" for foreign policy in the 1970s calls for meeting overseas military commitments and responsibilities, but with a "low profile" of US forces overseas, an obvious mandate for the astute employment of sea power. Simultaneously, US strategy calls for maintaining a capability for countering the other super-power at sea. But the Soviet Navy has already exceeded the United States in active surface ship and submarine numbers, including near parity in nuclear submarine strength (and a larger nuclear submarine construction programme). In some respects the characteristics and capabilities of the Soviet ships obviously are superior to those of their US Navy counterparts. Expanding Soviet naval operations during the past few years, notably the 200-ship-plus "Okean" exercise of April 1970, demonstrate that the Soviets have developed the ability to operate these ships on the high seas; regular deployments of warships to the Caribbean, Mediterranean, and Indian Ocean areas demonstrate that the Soviets are in fact using these ships as politico-economic-military forces.

The only category of warship in which the US Navy now and for the near future maintains a decisive advantage is the aircraft carrier. No other ship or even combination of surface ships can match the versatility, striking power and range, or endurance of the modern attack carrier and her 80 to 90 aircraft. Yet even this margin over the Soviet Navy is narrowing as the number of attack carriers in commission is being reduced, the construction of a fourth nuclear-powered carrier (the CVAN 70) is in doubt, and the adequacy of the F-14 ship-borne fighter (successor to the F-4 Phantom) is being questioned.

In their stead, some naval authorities are advocating smaller and lower-cost air capable ships, hydrofoil missile boats, and surface effect ships for a variety of missions. However, it seems questionable to consider even a squadron of air capable ships, each with perhaps six Harrier V/STOL attack aircraft and six SH-3 helicopters, as comparable to a single attack carrier.

But if the United States is seriously to address the question of countering the Soviet Union at sea, or indeed the Soviet allies equipped with advanced aircraft, missile boats, and submarines, the question of maintaining and even increasing attack carrier strength must be considered and difficult decisions have to be made. The aircraft carrier has been viable for so long, proved itself so often in hot and cold wars, and is so versatile that its place in modern warfare should be understood and properly evaluated.

The cost of modern air power—both land-based and sea-based is rising at an awesome rate. The costs of aircraft, ordnance, support equipment, manpower, and bases all are increasing. The CVAN 70 probably will cost more than \$800 million dollars if constructed under the Fiscal Year 1972 or 1973 programme; the cost will most likely be a billion dollars if delayed until 1975. However, this cost is comparable if not actually less than the cost of supporting an equivalent number of aircraft at land bases overseas in view of vulnerability, political considerations, support and logistics. Korea and Vietnam have amply demonstrated this comparison.

Solutions to the problem of maintaining a strong Navy with limited funds are difficult to devise. However, there

are some alternatives that warrant consideration: To maintain carrier strength the Navy could consider a halt to the construction of destroyers and frigates—which are being criticised for poor design as well as increasing costs—to permit carrier construction and operation. This would result in fewer screening ships, but this partially could be compensated by increased use of ship-based early warning and anti-submarine aircraft and helicopters, operating nuclear submarines as ASW escorts for carriers, and expansion of passive defensive activities (e.g. operating the carriers under conditions of electronic silence). Imaginative concepts of operation can compensate for shortages of escorts as long as carriers are available to provide the increased reconnaissance and strike capabilities over opposing naval forces.

All of the above is predicated on the thesis that a naval confrontation with the Soviet Union is possible (or could be avoided by strong US naval forces); similarly, sea-based tactical air would be the key in supporting US and allied operations ashore, and in operations against other naval and air forces. The North Korean capture of the US intelligence ship *Pueblo* and downing of a naval reconnaissance plane have called attention to the "other" military threats to US activities.

In the strategic/nuclear balance of forces the USSR has gained superiority over the United States in numbers of ICBMs and the megatonnage that can be delivered; and the current Soviet ballistic missile submarine construction rate of at least six submarines per year could give the USSR parity if not superiority in "Polaris" type submarines by 1975. (In addition to which the USSR has a number of nuclear powered and diesel-driven submarines with shorter-range missiles). Soviet progress in the strategic weapons area is of utmost concern to US defense leaders because improved guidance and multiple warhead technology (MIRV) could permit the predicted Soviet strategic forces of the mid-1970s to destroy virtually all US land-based ICBMs in a surprise first-strike attack; simultaneously, Soviet missile submarines could destroy most US manned bombers before they could become airborne. Accordingly, the US Navy's 41 Polaris/Poseidon submarines are acknowledged as the most survivable US strategic deterrent forces for the foreseeable future.

Arguments for partially or entirely replacing the land-based missiles and bombers with additional missiles at sea are being countered by arguments for maintaining the "triad" of deterrence—the combination of land-based bombers, land-based missiles, and sea-based missiles that have been the premise of US strategic forces for more than a decade. Although modern technology argues against this "triad", political and separate service concepts survive. Increasing the sea-borne portion of deterrence, either in submarines or surface ships, would increase weapon survivability, remove strategic targets from the heartland of the United States, and eliminate or reduce the need for the Safeguard Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) system that will have the primary purpose of protecting land-based Minuteman ICBMs.

The US Navy is receiving the largest portion of the proposed Fiscal Year 1972 defense budget allocation to the services, 34.56 per cent compared to 33.77 per cent for the Air Force and 31.66 per cent for the Army (about \$500 million more than the Air Force and \$2 billion more than the Army). This is the first budget since the "unification" of the armed services in 1947 that the Navy has received the largest share. However, the FY 1972 military budget represents the smallest portion of the Federal budget (32.1 per cent) and the smallest portion of the Gross National Product (6.8 per cent) since before the Korean War of 1950-1953. A comparison of FY 1972 defense spending in terms of constant dollars represents a decrease of \$23.9 billion from FY 1968, the Vietnam War peak.

FOREWORD—continued

The situation for the US Navy is serious: winding down the war in Indochina will make sea duty and its family separation less attractive; there is increasing hostility toward the military in the United States; reductions in ship strength make deployments longer and more arduous; commitments are continuing and, in some areas, increasing; inflation and real cost increases are making ship and aircraft procurement difficult; and new ships with relatively inferior capabilities are compounding the problems. There are no simple answers. The US Secretary of Defense declares: "I pledge that I shall continue to urge actions which will assure the supremacy of the US naval power". The President of the United States avers: "What the Soviet Union needs in terms of military preparedness is different from what we need. They are a land power, primarily, with a great potential enemy on the East. We are primarily, of course, a sea power, and our needs, therefore, are different."

USSR

By any standards the Soviet Fleet now represents the super-navy of a super-power. This tends to serve as the red rag to the bull to some countries whose spheres of influence, commensurate with their declining navies, are shrinking, while in step with her expanding navy Soviet spheres of influence are widening.

But it might well be the case that the Soviet Union is just as concerned about what she considers to be a threat to her overseas trade and ultimate security, namely the knitting together of NATO navies and the deployment of the fleets of western countries the breadth of the Atlantic and the breadth of the Pacific away from their own domains, as the USA is worried about the expansion and broad-scattering of the Soviet Navy.

After all, seen through Soviet eyes, the naval squadrons of the USSR are only just off their own Baltic doorstep in the North Sea, only just off their own Black Sea doorstep in the Eastern Mediterranean, and only just off their own Vladivostok doorstep in the China Seas. It is only in their recent forays into the Indian Ocean that Soviet warships are off limits and even then the excuse could justifiably be made that they are on passage from one part of the Soviet Union to another.

Whereas, also from the Soviet point of view, the USA maintains a powerful fleet in the Mediterranean 4,000 miles from New York and a huge fleet in South East Asia 5,000 miles from San Francisco.

So the USSR probably fears the overseas extension of the USA and the constant liaison of the British, French, Italian and German navies, through NATO, as much as the USA fears the ever widening ripples of Soviet sea power all round the world. And the USSR can always say that they are merely "showing the flag", much the same as the US Navy have done since the Second World War and the British Navy did when it had a comparable navy.

"The Soviet Navy on the seas and oceans reliably guarantees the USSR's security and its state interests", says the Soviet Minister of Defence. The men of the Soviet Navy were tirelessly improving their military and political knowledge, successfully mastering modern combat equipment and weapons, and enhancing vigilance and combat preparedness. They were ready at all times to defend the sea frontiers of the socialist motherland. The shipbuilding industry was reaching new achievements in equipping the Navy with combat ships and formidable armaments.

"Our strong ocean-going Navy is the basis of the might of our country" says the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy. "Soviet fighting ships are systematically present on the seas, including the areas where the shock navies of NATO are present. The presence of our ships in these areas binds the hands of the imperialists and deprives them

of the possibility of unhindered interference in the internal affairs of peoples. This situation is undoubtedly not to the liking of the imperialist 'hawks' who are trying to distort the purpose of the voyages of Soviet ships and to diminish their importance for the cause of peace. Of decisive importance in present day conditions is not only the number of ships, but mainly the quality of their nuclear missile, weapons and technical capabilities and the high morale and fighting capabilities of their personnel.

"In this respect our Navy is up to the level of present day demands. Its equipment and the vigilance of the crews protect our country from all kinds of surprises. The pride of our Navy is our nuclear submarines, which are fitted out with a variety of missiles which can be launched from under water. Our submarines, together with the Navy's missile-carrying and anti-submarine high speed, long range aircraft, are the basis of the striking might of the Navy. Up-to-date surface ships, equipped with the most modern weapons, are assigned a major role in carrying out the Navy's tasks. The Soviet Navy is an impressive deterrent in the way of imperialist reaction and adventures. At the same time the Soviet Navy is a symbol of our fraternal assistance to the friendly and freedom-loving peoples," declared the Commander-in-Chief.

Friend or foe will read what they will from this peroration, but it sounds very much like "show the flag and police the world", which is what Britain did until the Second World War and what the United States has been trying to do ever since.

Every year for the last decade or so a new class of rocket cruisers, missile destroyers, escorts, mine-sweepers, missile boats and/or torpedo boats has appeared in the Soviet Navy and most western observers have been impressed by their sophistication and novelty.

The past year has been no exception. Not only has a new class of missile cruisers appeared, the "Kresta II" class, bristling with their missile and radar control complex, but a new type of general purpose destroyer leader, the "Krivak" class, see photographs in the Late Addenda, and two new classes of nuclear-powered submarines have been operationally deployed, and a new class of guided missile corvettes is being built.

So prolific has the Soviet naval shipbuilding effort been that the USSR is now able to maintain a standing naval force in the Mediterranean five times stronger than five years ago to counter the American Sixth Fleet. Recently a US admiral remarked to the Editor of this annual with some bitterness that he could count more guns in the Soviet Fleet in the Mediterranean than he could in his own fleet there.

Again, five years ago the USSR had no warships in the Indian Ocean, but today there are a score of surface ships alone, and there is no telling how many Soviet submarines are in the area. The Soviet Navy is believed to be completing nuclear powered submarines at the rate of one every long month. (There was a gap of three years between the completion of Britain's third nuclear powered fleet submarine *Warspite* and the completion of the fourth, *Churchill*).

The United States is very worried about the growth of the Soviet Navy's mounting strength in the Mediterranean, along North Africa and in the Indian Ocean. But while the USA is shackled to an onerous war elsewhere she expects the countries of NATO in general and the countries bordering the Mediterranean in particular to increase their naval contribution to the common effort.

It is estimated that the strength of the Soviet Fleet now comprises 83 nuclear powered submarines, 318 conventionally powered submarines, 2 cruiser helicopter carriers, 26 cruisers including missile ships, 100 destroyers including missile armed vessels, 130 escorts of the small frigate and

FOREWORD—continued

corvette type, 270 coastal escorts and patrol vessels, 320 minesweepers, 125 missile boats, 325 torpedo boats, 125 amphibious ships and 75 smaller landing craft excluding minor LCMs. Support ships, auxiliaries and service craft run into thousands.

This navy list constitutes a very formidable force indeed, both as a strategic deterrent and for conventional sea warfare. It indicates the transition of the USSR from a land power to a sea power, and suggests that the Soviet Union is just as concerned about the ganging up of smaller Western navies, which have little power individually but immense power collectively, as the United States Navy is about the growing spread of the Soviet Navy all over the world.

United Kingdom

The bald statement in the 1971 Defence Estimates that "Work continues on the design of a through-deck cruiser" was hardly calculated to inspire credibility in the fashioning of the Royal Navy of the 1970s, to encourage those in the Fleet Air Arm to perfect their skill in those incredibly efficient dual-element machines *Ark Royal* and *Eagle*, or to aid recruiting.

With a change of Government it seems likely that *Ark Royal* will continue in service until the end of the decade and that *Eagle* will not now disappear from the naval scene until her economical life is expended. In which case, providing the so-called "through-deck cruiser" is completed and in operational service by 1980, the viability of the Fleet Air Arm would be assured in continuity.

From the first picture impression, (see this edition, page 343) the new through-deck cruiser appears to be quite an aircraft carrier in its own right, capable of operating vertical and short take off fixed wing aircraft as well as helicopters. "What's in a name? That which we call a rose By any other name"

In this particular case there is quite a lot in a name. Had it been generally known at the time of the great Fleet Air Arm controversy, when the late Government was cutting down Britain's aircraft carriers right and left under the expedient euphemism of "phasing out", that the new through-deck cruisers, of which three are envisaged eventually, were going to be so viable for operating aircraft it would have been realised that it was in the nation's interests to maintain at parity, or even above par, the recruitment of pilots and aircrew into the Royal Navy, thus ensuring a continuity of training and expertise right through from the passing of the great angled-deck carriers to the advent of the smaller through-deck, aircraft-carrying cruisers.

Smaller or not, however, the new style cruiser-carrier does not appear to be any the less complex or cheaper, judging by the time it is taking to get it off the drawing board and the figures mentioned as being the likely eventual cost. £50,000,000 was the estimate for the projected fixed-wing aircraft carrier CVA 01 which was cancelled a few years ago on the grounds of economy, but the first through-deck cruiser will probably give no change from that. The constant fear of the Royal Navy is that it will price itself out of existence.

Perhaps it could be forgiven if the question were posed as to why the "thing", as it has been both bitterly and affectionately called, has to be so costly. A few years ago, the Americans wanted a class of ships quickly "in the vertical envelopment concept" to support the Marine Corps. The US naval architects simply took a wall-sided mercantile hull of the C 2 type, virtually an oblong steel box sharpened at one end and faired-off at the other, and fitted in all the offices and shops required to operate and maintain helicopters around this platform which of its own nature provided the large hangar in its belly for the stowage and servicing of helicopters and the long flat top for a flight

deck. The resulting first "amphibious assault ship", essentially a helicopter carrier, but a potential take-off-and-landing strip for vertical fixed-wing aircraft, was the *Iwo Jima*, built for only \$40,000,000/£16,000,000, less than the cost of a modern British destroyer. Six more ships of the class have been built since in an average time of only two years. So it can indeed be said that the USA got its amphibious/helicopter carrier squadron cheaply and quickly. Yet it serves the purpose. That splendid acrobatic flying machine, the Harrier, capable of hovering, lifting and dropping vertically, and crabbing sideways, could be operated from simple ships of this type as well as helicopters. And the flight deck is ample for a short take-off to save fuel and boost the payload.

It is greatly to be trusted that the three through-deck cruisers will materialise and not only for strategic and tactical reasons. There is a lot in prestige. Prestige is power, and power is a deterrent, the last stop deterrent before the nuclear one. But there is little prestige in an entirely small ship navy, desirable though smaller and cheaper ships are in many ways. There must be the leaven of the capital ship whatever form it may take. When Britain ceases to have big ships she will have lost face for ever and she will have no voice at the conference table.

Of the few big ships remaining in the Royal Navy; the former fixed wing aircraft carrier *Hermes* (Britain's youngest carrier, completed only eleven years ago) is being converted into a commando ship/helicopter carrier; and the conventional cruiser *Tiger's* conversion to a commandment helicopter ship is nearing completion, but the conversion of her sister ship *Lion* has been cancelled.

The fixed-wing aircraft carrier *Centaur*, only fifteen years old, and originally a sister ship of *Hermes*, is regrettably being scrapped: the question could logically be posed why she is not also being converted into a commando ship/helicopter carrier (for *Albion* and *Bulwark* have now been running almost continually for a decade or so and must eventually be retired) or at least into some form of amphibious ship combined with a vertical take-off interim role, until the new through-deck cruisers materialise.

The last two of the class of eight "County" class guided missile armed destroyers, *Antrim* and *Norfolk* have been completed, and *Bristol*, the only guided missile armed destroyer of her type, is nearing completion. The first of a new class of guided missile armed destroyers, *Sheffield*, has been launched.

Work continues on the design of a new class of general purpose frigates, the "Type 22". The last two of the 26 very successful general purpose frigates of the "Leander" class, *Apollo* and *Ariadne*, are being completed. The first of the new "Type 21" frigates, *Amazon* has been launched.

In the underwater field, the fifth and sixth nuclear-powered fleet submarines, *Conqueror* and *Courageous* are being accepted from the builders; the seventh, eighth and ninth, *Swiftsure*, *Sovereign* and *Superb*, are under construction; and the tenth is being ordered. But a matter of concern is that the number of submarines being produced is not nearly keeping pace with the number being scrapped. The "T" class diesel-powered submarines have gone, even though 13 were reconstructed and converted in recent years, and only a handful of the 16 "A" class conventional submarines remain in service.

So the backbone of the Royal Navy's submarine patrol service, apart from deterrent and strategic considerations, are the 21 diesel powered boats of the "Oberon" and "Porpoise" classes. The need is clearly pointed for the urgent building of more medium sized diesel-electric boats of about 1,000 tons for normal operational patrol, fleet exercises and routine training.

Raymond V. B. Blackman

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 31, 1971

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR:

HENRY KISSINGER

FROM:

JON M. HUNTSMAN 

SUBJECT:

Soviet First Strike Capabilities

The following report appeared in the July 30, 1971 News Summary:

"Executive Privilege continues to be a subject of debate on the Hill, with Rusk favoring it --- with Harriman wanting to know more about China! and with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Kalb) voting no foreign aid until they get a secret DOD report.

Again, Jane's Fighting Ships --- and the Soviet buildup makes the nets. This time, CBS notes that Jane's says that the Soviets by mid-seventies could wipe out our land-based deterrent in a first-strike. Then comes report on the Northern Flank of NATO, where Soviets have turned the North Sea "into a Soviet Lake." Alarming report on the networks, which says while US is watching Soviet thrust into the Med, no one seems to be paying great attention to the North and Baltic seas where Soviets dominate and nary a NATO vessel seems in sight."

It was requested that you get the answer to this.

Please submit your report to the office of the staff secretary.

Thank you.

cc: H. R. Haldeman
A. Butterfield