



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND 02841-5010

*Copy is in
Maritime Strategy
File*

8 July 1985

Dear Henry,

Again let me thank you for your fine letter of 31 May. I certainly wish you well in your new home and trust that you will continue to write. We all need your incisive analysis.

I must admit that I am still less pessimistic than you are concerning the general direction of strategic thought, but that may simply be because I haven't been around long enough to understand the situation. I do think there is nothing particularly mysterious about the nature of the Maritime Strategy nor the general directions that it is taking. In effect, it is first of all an assessment of the nature of the threats facing the U.S. and a set of assumptions concerning the probable role of maritime power in meeting that threat. Until now it has largely concentrated on the problem of the Soviet Union and the deterrence of general war with that state. On the basis of these assumptions a number of strategic, logistical, and tactical studies have been undertaken and are strongly reflected in the work of the Strategic Studies Groups and OP-603.

Admiral Winnefeld recently dropped me a note in which he laid out what he thought to be the basic assumptions of the Maritime Strategy and I enclose them for your consideration. In general, I think he has defined rather well the assumptions under which we are now operating.

As to the curriculum at the Naval War College, I would say overall that it still represents a coherent approach to strategic analysis and that the manner in which military theory is used is less a matter of inattention to that issue than a pedagogical judgment as to how to make the students think theoretically. I happen to think, as you do, that a coherent military theory should be treated up front but others have argued as effectively that a theory should emerge from a more empirical and case study-oriented approach. Frankly, my impression is that both work rather well

and that we are, for the first time in many years, turning out some genuine strategic thinkers. Again I am prepared to accept that this optimism is a result of my "youthful enthusiasm".

Again, it is good hearing from you.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rob", written in a cursive style.

ROBERT S. WOOD
Dean
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Rear Admiral Henry E. Eccles, USN (Ret.)
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ASSUMPTIONS UNDERPINNING THE MARITIME STRATEGY

1. A U.S.-Soviet war will be global (Lehman/Watkins, 3854; West, 2-3, 10)
2. A U.S.-Soviet war could have its genesis in events outside Western and Central Europe. (Lehman/Watkins, 3855; West, 12)
3. A quick WP victory over NATO in AFCENT is by no means certain. (West, 2-4, 10)
4. Even if WP forces overrun the NATO center, the war isn't over. (West, 3-4, 10)
5. Escalation to nuclear use in NATO/WP war is by no means certain. (Lehman/Watkins, 3893; West 2-3, 10)
6. In a long war (more than 30 days) SLOCs are important. (Lehman/Watkins, 3880)
7. The Soviets are sensitive to threats to/attacks on their maritime flanks. (Lehman/Watkins, 3877, 3890, 3900) ?
8. The most likely areas for direct applications of U.S./NATO naval power on the Soviets are in the Norwegian/Barents seas and the Northwestern Pacific. (Direct application from the Baltic, Mediterranean,, North and Arabian seas are not ruled out, but are less likely.) (Lehman/Watkins, 3871-3875, 3887)
9. U.S./NATO naval forces can attack the Soviets in those areas if:
 - Operations in the theater are properly sequenced (e.g., U.S. SSN roll back Soviet naval forces). (Lehman/Watkins, 3868, 3870, 3871, 3878)
 - Naval forces are adequately supported by land-based air (ASW and AAW). (Lehman/Watkins, 3871, 3874)
 - Naval forces are in great strength. (Lehman/Watkins, 3887, 3900)
 - Attacks on Soviet naval and air bases are not ruled out. (Lehman/Watkins, 3871-3873)
10. The most likely incentives for those operations are:
 - To reinforce allies (e.g., Norway, Japan). (Lehman/Watkins, 3860)
 - To threaten/attack Soviet SSBN bastions.
 - To attrite or remove threat to SLOCs. (Lehman/Watkins, 3870)

11. Sequential operations in selected theaters are necessary to achieve the necessary mass to execute the strategy. (Lehman/Watkins, 3854, 3856)
12. Carrier forces can defeat massive submarine, missile, and air attacks (if properly supported and employed) and survive to destroy enemy naval and air forces (including at their bases if necessary).
13. The maritime strategy is an integral part of (not alternative to) coalition warfare. (Lehman/Watkins, 3854)
14. Deterring the Soviets is a seamless web; Soviets will not bet all on winning a short war. They must also be convinced they can win a long war in the event their short war calculations are faulty. (West, 11-12)

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Prof. Robert Wood
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10 July 1985

Dear Bob:

Naturally I was happy to get your letter of 8 July and, since you suggest that I continue writing, I will do so even though I no longer have a secretary.

We have been here just four weeks and are very comfortable in an excellent apartment with a fine view of the tree tops of the big woods. Since we are 1/4 of a mile from the dining room and central facilities we must walk a great deal even though it is getting more and more difficult for me.

First On the subject of Military Theory; In your letter you make three points 1. How should military theory be used, 2. How to make students think theoretically, 3. Theory should emerge from an empirical case oriented approach.

Of course these three valid questions are closely related and I have discussed them in many of my books and papers, particularly pp 3-8 in my "Military Fundamentals" of Jan. '74, my memo to Weschler of 1977, and in my comments on Julian Lider's book as published May-June '85 N.W.C. Review.

Point #3 "Theory should emerge from a more empirical and case study approach" to my mind is the critical issue: My theory statements in Logistics in the "National Defense", "Military Concepts and Philosophy" and "Military Power in a Free Society" are precisely that; "empirical case studies" starting on the Joint Ops. Review Board of the J.C.S. in 1946 up to and including the 1973 Arab-Israeli War: all this being attested by the extensive footnotes in all three books.

I cannot conceive of how any man, on the basis of a three months' study of strategy with good guidance or even a nine month study, can be expected to evolve his own coherent comprehensive military theory.

Yet no one's concept of theory should remain unchallenged. I, of course, condensed this idea in my 25 year old chart "The Scholar and the Operator".

In this connection, Stan Turner took the view of Point #3 when he revised the whole study at the War College in 1972-73. Yet in the ensuing 12 years I have neither seen nor heard of any significant original, or new statement of military theory from any member of the staff or student body who supposedly were evolving their own concepts from that short empirical study. If there has been such worthwhile original idea or concept I should like to see it.

Of course I have not attended strategy seminars in recent years nor have I seen the classified papers. Therefore some gems may have escaped my notice.

I know that many fine tactical ideas have been generated in this time and I applaud that. But tactics is only one part of the problem of theory.

One further point which I consider critical to the formulation and conduct of the curriculum. The integration of the work of the War College departments into a coherent structure which provides an understanding of the nature and conduct of modern war and particularly the nature and problems of High Command can't possibly be left to the guidance of evolving student concepts but must be based on something more authoritative, substantial and tested by critical experience. Here is where my idea of a postulated theory and structure of military knowledge applies. This is true even though you must continually challenge the content of that postulation.

But enough of theory, now for Maritime Strategy: I really don't like to make anything other than tentative comments on the Navy's "Maritime Strategy" because I have seen only disconnected fragments of the whole. When John Hattendorf first spoke to me about it and his proposed study in February I stated my interest and desire to comment seriously. But since that time his travels and illness and my own illness and other problems prevented any subsequent significant discussions. About all I know about John's trip is his statement that the CINCs were not enthusiastic about it. None of the other members of the staff that I talked to seemed to know or care very much about it. Therefore the rest of this letter I write from only partial knowledge of what the real substance and issues are.

Few of Adm. Winnefeld's assumptions are true ASSUMPTIONS in the sense that word is used on pp 155 and 171 of "Sound Military Decisions/." Instead it is a list of general considerations and opinions as to the circumstances under which a conventional war with the U.S.S.R. would be waged. But since S.M.D. and the rigor of the ESTIMATE OF THE SITUATION have not been emphasized at the Naval War College for many years, I would not expect much semantic rigor from OP-NAV.

My comments on his 14 Points should be read in the light of this, my admitted predjudice. I found Adm. Winnefeld's list of 14 Assumptions underpinning the Maritime Strategy both inform-

ative and interesting for they indicate hard work coupled however with semantic sloppiness and lack of understanding of the rigor of strategic analysis. I invite your attention to pp 155 and 171 of Sound of Military Decision.

In the first place I see no assumption or consideration of the logistic support required to support the operations or the degree to which it can be expected. This omission is typical of the man who sees "strategy" as something separate or independent of logistics; an all too common type. Second; I see no mention of the attrition to be expected in the conduct of the sequential operations contemplated. This of course is a critical factor both for tactics and logistics, not to mention strategy and operational timing.

As for the 14 Assumptions themselves, numbers 1 to 5; #1 is a valid assumption. #2 - 5 are important considerations and statements of uncertainties.

Number 6, SLOCs will be vital rather than important in a long war. They also are vital in the initial phases of any major war! Number 7, I have no idea what the phrase "The Soviets are sensitive to threats and attacks on their maritime flanks," means. Does that mean that those flanks are weak or that they are strong?

Number 8 is not an assumption, it is too vague and general. Number 9; "The U.S. and NATO can attack the Soviets in those areas." Does he mean can attack successfully or effectively with acceptable losses and major strategic gains? What have the Naval War College War Games over the last 5 - 10 years demonstrated?

Number 10, Is he talking about incentives or strategic, military, political objectives? Number 11 - So obvious as to be trite.

Number 12, Carrier Forces etc; again what do War Games show? Taken literally this means that we assume that carrier forces can win the war if properly handled and supported - what does proper support mean?

Number 13, Maritime Strategy - This is not a military assumption. This is a matter of definition - a matter of clear fact!

Number 14, Soviet Seamless Web - I simply do not know what this means. Who does the convincing? The Soviets or the U.S.A.?

Two points are obvious. 1, These 14 Assumptions are only a part of the Maritime Strategy and it is not really fair to comment on them without seeing the other parts of the analysis.

2; I really don't expect the same degree of semantic precision and analytical rigor from a serving officer that I would expect from a senior member of the War College Staff. This is the area where my plea for a better institutional memory at the College comes in.

Now for the Naval Maritime Strategy itself as I see it from the papers put out by the Office of C.N.O. and Adm. Service's letter to OP-60.

It seems to assume that the U.S. will have or successfully seize the initiative in a conventional war with the U.S.S.R. It seems to assume that the NATO allies agree with this concept of how to fight such a war.

Finally I quote a passage from Rosinski's "New Thoughts on Strategy" a paper which I have quoted and distributed freely and which in my opinion is the best single statement of strategy in the English language. "Therefore except where there is overwhelming superiority, strategy must be selective in order to attain economy of force. Comprehensive control of a field of action means a concentration on those minimum key lines of action or key positions from which the entire field can be positively controlled."

This Maritime Strategy, to me, is a disturbing reminder of the French policy which in W.W.I was such a disaster - "Attack, Attack, Always Attack!"

The strategy shows no attempt to analyze or even clearly state the political, military, or strategic objectives of the courses of action proposed or what might be a satisfactory attainment of those objectives. I therefore quote my old slide, based on the Rosinski concept of Strategy as Control:

A STRATEGIC CONCEPT IS A STATEMENT OF:
WHAT TO CONTROL?
FOR WHAT PURPOSE?
TO WHAT DEGREE?
WHEN TO INITIATE CONTROL
HOW LONG TO CONTROL
IN GENERAL HOW TO CONTROL IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES.

Since nowhere in any of the papers does the Maritime Strategy place any emphasis on Control or on the objectives I must say that I consider the concept as expressed to be unsound, superficial and apparently based on the fallacy that strategy and destruction are synonymous.

In the light of my partial knowledge, I have already written more than I should have attempted. Let me close on one final note on theory. At no time in the last thirty years has any member of the War College staff ever explicitly challenged any statement

of theory or of related fact that I have cited in my lectures, books or articles even though I have repeatedly requested such challenge. Nor has anyone suggested a better statement or phrasing of the material. Frankly I don't know what that means.

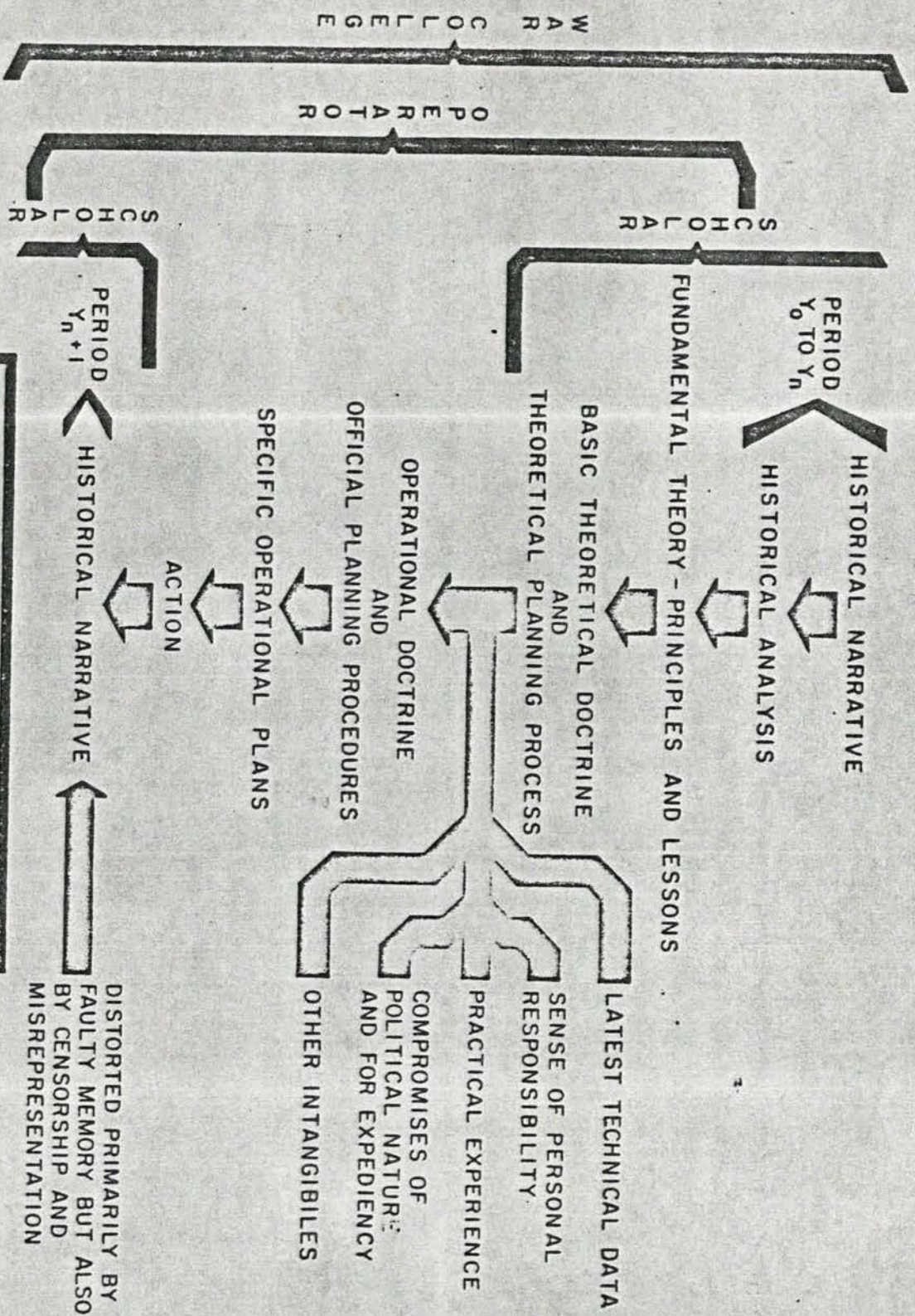
I hope that you will find this helpful.

With very best regards,
As always,

Encl. Chart Scholar and Operator

Copy to John Hattendorf

Blind to Paul Schratz
CDR Corgan



HOWEVER, THERE IS A CONTINUED PROCESS OF ACTION, NARRATIVE, ANALYSIS, DOCTRINE, PLANS, ACTION -----

THE CHIEF AREAS OF INTEREST OF THE SCHOLAR AND THE OPERATOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE THEORY OF WAR

DISTORTED PRIMARILY BY FAULTY MEMORY BUT ALSO BY CENSORSHIP AND MISREPRESENTATION

THERE IS MUCH OVERLAP IN THESE AREAS. A WAR COLLEGE SPANS BOTH AREAS.

~~But~~ I regret that we cannot discuss your letter and enclosures quietly with a blackboard on which to note the points of agreement & disagreement.

Therefore I will express my ideas with ~~the~~ as clearly as possible noting that they are based largely on "Sound Military Decision" and "Rosinski's New Thoughts on Strategy" both of which came from deep historical study and a thorough knowledge of Clausewitz, Mahan ~~and~~ Corbett and Nomura and WWI & with Rosinski. WWII.

Since few of our OP-Nav. Chiefs and Planners have made ~~such~~ thorough study of ~~an~~ or of the "Estimate of the Situation" I do not expect Semantics report nor rigorous estimates from them. They are doing the best they can with limited resources and intellectual background.

Furthermore I suspect that
they are under pressure to
support Sec Nav & CNO in
their testimony before the Senate
justifying Navy Budget Requests.

This may pave the way
for the Strategy Sections of
OP-NAV to be primarily Cheery
Sections for the edicts of Sec NAV
and C.N.O.

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Notes from
C. NO. DRAFT
THE MARITIME STRATEGY.

P 28. The Maritime Strategy is designed to help achieve the National Goal of War Termination on favorable terms.

P 34-35 Describe a relatively orderly transition from peace to war during which both Soviet or U.S. forces would move war deployments presumably without opposition. "There would be global forward movement of Naval forces." P 34 -- and lead portions of a marine MAB would be air lifted to Norway." --- p 35 we anticipate activation of reserves and Coast Guard cutters being made available to the CINCS for SLOC protection."

p 36 " describes Allied Navies taking similar measures, plus marshalling sea lift assets. p 37 includes Army and Air Force similar measures.

p 38 " With enemy and Allied forces moving into place globally, at some point a major Soviet attack could occur and actual large scale warfare ... would commence.

5 AUG '85

ADD TO MARITIME STRATEGY H.E. ECCLES

The most critical aspect of any National or Naval Strategy is that in case of large-scale conventional combat, things do not ^{even} occur in accordance with any preconceived Scenario or contingency plan. Not all Areas or regions are of equal importance and the course of events will inevitably demand large scale shifts of force and ^{and} deployment of force to deal with the actual situation rather than that of the plan.

This emphasizes the subordination of "Service Plans or Strategies" to the National Strategy or plan. I can only assume that the regional ComCs understand this!