

CURRENT STRATEGY FORUM, 1978

"U.S. NATIONAL STRATEGY AND FOREIGN POLICY"

BY

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29 MARCH 1978

INTRODUCTION by Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale, USN--President of the Naval War College.

I don't need any notes for this introduction. It's quite a coincidence that our speaker's name brings to mind memories of 24 years ago when 20 of us were going through another school, one that several other guys in this audience have attended; it's called Test Pilot School. Of those 20, 18 of us were sort of routine, MARK I Naval Aviators. That is to say, we had the requisite BS degree, flight experience, etc. Many of you would recognize several of these 18. One of them was Admiral Tom Hayward who is CINCPACFLT now.

But the other two were exceptions. They didn't meet the Academic criteria; they came there by special effort. They hadn't gotten their Bachelor's degrees and they both had not only a lot of enthusiasm, but seemed to be men with a special drive, a special purpose in life. One of those guys was a kid from Ohio with red hair and a big smile. His name was John Glenn. The other had quite a different background.

While John Glenn was a fighter pilot and, as you all know, a very good one, the other guy was a P-boat pilot, but a very special kind of P-boat pilot. In fact, his father had been an aeronautical engineer in Czarist Russia and a seaplane pilot for the Czar. After the revolution the family brought what was then a little boy to Connecticut. His name was Vic Utgoff.

Vic grew up and tried to relive his father's life of aviation. He became a civilian pilot, an instructor in a Connecticut civilian flying operation. He met another instructor there named Margaret and they were married. His younger brother went to the Naval Academy and graduated before World War II, but Vic went in the Navy when the war started and flew seaplanes, which was by then the family tradition. He never quite got the college degree but was a serious scholar who knew more about aeronautics than any of us. He got to Test Pilot School by great effort, through special letters and pleas and he got there by special permission three weeks after classes had started. He paid his own way from California, left his family at home there until after he graduated.

We thought of the guy as the "mad Russian." I mean that in the best sort of way. He'd flown many kinds of airplanes, but mostly big ones. At Test Pilot School, we flew big ones, but most of the time we flew little-bitty fighters, some with props on them, some with jets on them, and whatnot. We had at least 20 different kinds of airplanes there at Patuxent. Everybody had to fly everything and Vic was then in his 40s with a

15-year-old kid, plus others. We'd stuff him in a cockpit, and we'd brief him, and away he'd go. Two hours later he'd come whistling in with the data.

I remember we had a cocky Marine by the name of Drury Wood who was kind of the ops officer, a flight testing instructor. He had a base radio in his office at the school and Vic was always talking with Drury on the air. (Every cockpit was hand tooled, individually equipped with special flight test instruments; there was no standardization. The special instruments would sometimes be down here or up there.) One time Vic called base and says "Drury I can't find the Rate of Roll Meter on this F-8." (He was in an old F-8F BEARCAT). Drury said, "Okay, Vic, just put the stick up in the corner and see what moves." Then there was kind of an ugh and Vic grunted "I found it, I found it $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Anyway, Vic graduated and got the assignment of his heart's desire, it was The Flight Test Division. This fit into his overall scheme, because the P-6M was coming along; that was the jet propelled seaplane, if you'll remember. It was an item of great aeronautical interest. Could we make seaplanes which have the capability for almost infinite weight? Could we put a lot of fuel in them and cruise for days? This sort of range was not designed into this plane but the P-6M was to be in the prototype. Martin pilots were flying it and Vic was going to be the flight test project officer.

When the planes arrived in Patuxent, contractor's pilot jumped over into the right seat and started checking out our flight test pilots. Now in those days, and still, I suppose, when you take an experimental plane up, you have chase planes that follow along to witness what happens. On this day I happened to be the chase in a jet fighter for the second part of the hop. During the first part, the company pilot had taken another officer up in the left seat and they'd flown about an hour. Later, after Vic had switched into the seat, I was chasing the bird up the Potomac River at about 20,000 feet when suddenly it just became a big ball of fire. I was startled, the debris was just all over the air, pieces of wings and fuselage were just tumbling down and of course nobody could have possibly survived.

The next day Bob Selmer and I flew down to NACA at Langley Field (NACA was the old aeronautical research group which predates NASA). We were there on several items of flight testing business, and we went in to the office of an old fellow named Mel Gough who was a big man in aeronautics in those days. I believe he had a son who was in the Navy and may still be in the Navy. The son flew Photo Crusaders years ago. Mel was on the phone and he was really agitated about this P-6M accident of the day before; it had universal interest. He put down the phone and said, "You know what I think happened, I think that slab tail broke loose and pitched that thing into negative "g" catastrophic failure."

While Vic was flying, the first Navy pilot was being debriefed; he had said that it was a great ride and he was very excited about it. He said, "Boy, it really makes some funny noises. One time there was a big 'clunk' back aft and the yoke shook." "I told the civilian pilot and he said 'That's normal.'" Mel said, "You know, the longitudinal control system has two main structural supports. The first member broke on the first checkout, the second member broke on the second - and you know the rest." The aeronautical buffs here will realize what we're talking about. Those irreversible control systems allow you to overcome sloppiness in your engineering design with hydraulic pressure. "Did you know where that slab tail would free float? If that thing came unglued at that altitude and speed, my calculations show it would put that plane in an instantaneous negative 13 G pitchover." Mel's guess turned out to be about right. There was no way any pilot could have prevented that accident.

Vic's wife Margaret put little Vic through college (MIT) and then she died of cancer. Little Vic had some little brothers and sisters which he in turn helped with the pay he got as a VSTOL expert, as an aeronautical engineer. When far enough ahead, he went back to Purdue and got his Ph.D EE, which is not a piece of cake. I, of course, had lost track of him for over twenty years, when I noticed last year that my partner in OP 60 was scheduled for an appointment with "Victor Utgoff."

When they walked out I confronted this guy down front and pieced together much of this story. Vic's dad would be proud of him today, and it's a pleasure to introduce the son of an old friend I loved so much.