

NAVAL COMMAND COURSE  
NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND  
02840

7 October 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

Subj: Conceptual framework for the Seapower Symposium address,  
"The Role of Naval Forces;" request for comments on

Encl: (1) Conceptual framework for the subject address

1. Enclosure (1) is forwarded for your review and comment.
2. The conceptual framework for the keynote address is in preparation. The keynote address will include references to both this address and the content of the address on freedom of the seas.
3. As a matter of practicality, your comments are requested not later than 13 October 1969.

Very respectfully,

F. W. ULBRICHT  
Captain, U. S. Navy  
Director, Seapower Symposium  
Project

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## THE ROLE OF NAVAL FORCES

(conceptual framework)

### 1. Main Thrust.

The subject will be addressed from the standpoint of how naval forces can best be utilized in the future peacetime environment in order to assist in the maintenance of peace and stability. The speaker will take note of the strategic environment and the trends of the navies of the two super-powers (US and USSR), their strengths and weaknesses, and the strategic implications for other nations. Giving due recognition to political realities and constraints, the address should then delineate the alternatives available to the major powers and the attendant world-wide implications. It should then move to the main argument: that it is now a feasible and desirable option for free world navies to move further in the direction of multi-national, regional cooperative naval efforts and that these efforts should not necessarily involve directly the U. S. Navy. The feasibility of such a policy should be demonstrated by referring to the example of the Standing Naval Force Atlantic (STANAVFORLANT). The principles of regional cooperative measures should be related to the provisions of the United Nations Charter. Finally, this policy should be related to what is beginning to emerge as a U. S. sea-based forward strategy.

### 2. Outline.

#### A. Introduction

- the functional role of naval forces in the future, as it is addressed here, will not be substantially different than the classical role
- role addressed here does not pertain to the use of naval forces as vehicles for the delivery of strategic, nuclear weapons

Enclosure (1)

- the classic role addressed here is the use of naval forces to
  - project power in order to influence events in support of either national or agreed multi-national aims
  - protect oceanic interests of nations or regional international organizations

B. The strategic environment of the 1970's; current trends and implications

- a brief description of the strategic environment in the near future
  - the nuclear weapons environment .... the move towards parity between the super-powers, the prospect of nuclear proliferation, the emerging Chinese Communist nuclear capability ..... all of this promotes the urgency of solving local conflicts while keeping them localized and avoiding confrontations of the major powers
  - the nationalistic fragmentation of the so-called Communist Bloc, along with the application of the Brezhnev Doctrine in "buffer states."
  - the multiplicity of nations
  - the continuing impotence of the United Nations
  - the continuing opportunities for "wars of national liberation" particularly in view of no clear-cut decision in Vietnam
- the trends of force structure in the USA and USSR navies, and the strategic implications
  - the Soviet Navy continues to grow and to change in its methods of deployment
    - == the Soviet submarine fleet is still the major concern; uniquely complementing torpedoes and ballistic missiles with guided cruise missiles; 12 percent of the force can launch strategic missiles and 16 percent carry cruise missiles .... they have a relatively new ability to operate independently, over long distances, and for extended periods of time
    - == the new 18,000 ton missile equipped helicopter carrier Moskva represents not only new ASW capability but also provides limited capabilities for the projection of forces ashore.

- == the Soviet thrust into the Mediterranean has been spectacular especially since the Arab-Isreali war in June 1967 .... only last August, allied authorities reported an estimate of 65 Soviet warships in the Mediterranean
- == since the six day war, the Soviets have obtained base rights at Alexandria, at Mers-el-Kabir in Algeria, and at Latakia in Syria.
- == one can only speculate at this time what the intensity of the Soviet thrust southeastward will be, once the Suez canal is re-opened
- in short, in the last fifteen years, the Soviet Union has built a balanced, versatile and modern naval force which is second only to the U. S. Navy.... related to this is the construction of mobile logistic forces designed for underway replenishment and advanced base support operations
- it is important to note that the combatants and major logistic ships have been built in Russia ..... related to this is the recognized Soviet capability to build 20 to 30 nuclear submarines per year in covered shipyards which are immune to the eyes of reconnaissance satellites..
- another significant arm of the Soviet maritime capability is embodied in approximately 1,400 ships totalling about 10.4 million tons .... a significant economic force and a potent vehicle for political-economic penetration
- all of these factors underscore certain realities which must be faced by maritime nations throughout the world
- the Soviet Navy is formidable and a force which will be seen in all areas of the world
- the Soviet naval strategy can no longer be described as defensively and coastally oriented but is taking on a globally oriented nature, both in force structure and in method of deployment
- the Soviet maritime strategy has a sound conceptual unity, being supported across the board by a modern and vigorous shipbuilding program
- the Soviet Union, through its maritime strategy, has broken out of containment, in effect has outflanked NATO, and it has the real capability to exert maritime presence throughout the world
- the Soviet maritime capabilities have opened up a vast new spectrum of opportunities for political-economic goals, ... these goals are not new but the capability to effectively support them is....

- the force structure of the U. S. Navy is undergoing change
  - force cuts have been made recently but these cuts, forced by political realities have not basically altered force balance
  - the effect of the cuts has been to retire ships which were already old
  - this presents an opportunity to emphasize new programs
  - there is a real reduction in capability ... this reduction may be with us for some time to come
  - the major striking power of the U. S. Navy has not been altered
  - the future of the U. S. Navy rests on its projected ship-building program ..... the attainment of this program, given the political mood of the Congress, will be difficult but is a foreseeable goal
- many observers see a significant change in the U. S. national strategy ..... a strategy which will continue to support our commitments but will be more restrained in the use of forces to support local governments on land....
  - this may auger well for a strategy more firmly planted on U. S. maritime power but if this is realized, that power will be subject to greater restraint by:
    - == political constraints based upon national priorities which look inward to internal problems
    - == the fact that no longer will the U. S. Navy make its presence felt alone and without the accompanying presence of Soviet maritime power
- these changes in the maritime balance of power force all maritime nations to re-examine the alternatives presented to them

C. Alternatives presented to the free maritime nations of the world

- the alternatives we are concerned with concern the use (or role) of naval forces in the maintenance of future peace and stability
- the alternatives must be considered with full regard for the changing maritime balance between the two super-powers and with the assumption that most free maritime nations are now in far better position to assume greater roles in peacekeeping.

- four basic alternatives to be considered in the future role of naval forces:
  - integrated United Nations naval forces and naval measures
  - national naval forces and efforts
  - naval roles based on military alliances
  - multi-national cooperative naval efforts based on regionally oriented, mutual interests
- UN naval forces in the maintenance of peace
  - the UN's organizational structure empirically has forced its use of military forces
    - to be made up of neutral or neutralist forces
    - to act after the fact in conflicts
    - to perform in an observer role; to take passive measures
    - to be closely controlled land forces
  - lack of commonality of national interests forces an overwhelming inhibition in the structuring of integrated UN naval forces
- national naval forces and efforts
  - among free world navies, this effort has depended heavily upon the direct involvement of the U.S.
  - while maintaining a guarantee of its treaty commitments, the U. S. will be less likely in the future to directly involve itself in the support of non-U.S. maritime interests
  - free world nations can and must do more on their own, but these efforts may be insufficient when attempted unilaterally
- naval efforts based upon military alliances
  - will continue to be effective but do not provide effective measures in many areas of the world
  - from the U.S. viewpoint, future military alliances will likely become more difficult to establish

- alliances are usually oriented towards specific threats and become outdated, sometimes quickly
- multi-national, regionally oriented naval cooperation
  - like all multi-national efforts, must take second priority to specific national interests ..... a fact of life....
  - more likely to succeed if based on regional, mutual interests; a real advantage over geographically broader based cooperation
  - multi-national, regional efforts offer real political advantages:
    - limit the influence of super-powers in local matters
    - demonstrate a substantive, mutual concern for stability
    - can provide a base for further cooperation in economic matters
    - are more apt to avoid cultural points of conflict
    - multi-national forces add up to more than the same forces employed nationally
  - the United Nations Charter fully endorses the basic concept of regional cooperative measures in support of regional concerns..... this is compatible with the formation of regional naval efforts
  - from the evolving U.S. viewpoint, would likely gain far greater material support than those measures which necessarily involve U. S. forces

D. The uniqueness of multi-national naval forces

- compared to army and air forces, are easily integrated into task forces
- commonality of training and experience exists among blue-water naval forces..... a de facto fraternal bond, all sharing in the common hazards of the sea, regardless of nationality....
- the ship and her company, as the basic integral unit, maintains her national identity

- compared to other forces, the communications interface in command and control of a multi-national naval force is more easily defined and established.....this has been demonstrated many times, and most notably by the NATO multi-national naval force, Standing Naval Force Atlantic.....
- finally, naval forces, whether national or multi-national, can move quickly to an area of concern out of sight and without provocation of political interests.

E. The Standing Naval Force Atlantic as an example of multi-national regional cooperation

- although many of the factual details and principles of operation of STANAVFORLANT are necessarily classified and within the purview of NATO authorities, certain principles can be logically inferred
- it demonstrates a regional, mutual concern of the nations participating in it ..... in this case, a concern for the Soviet threat
- it continues to show that multi-national naval units can operate together and can solve command and control problems
- by its existence, it illustrates that the participating nations are satisfied with the answers to questions regarding the reversion of units to their own national control.
- it further shows that the participating nations are satisfied that it will not be used in conflict with individual national interests
- it provides a means for showing, at sea, to the Soviet Navy itself the unity of the nations involved
- it utilizes destroyer types of ships .... the type of ship most universally employed by maritime nations throughout the world

F. Conclusion.

- the maritime balance of power has changed and continues to change in favor of the Soviet Union
- the changing strategic viewpoint within the U.S. implies a continuing support of its alliance commitments with much greater caution in direct involvement in local conflicts..... traditional recipients of U.S. aid will have to do more for themselves....
- the projected U.S. strategy will likely be one which is founded upon a sea-based forward strategy with less force ashore
- of the alternatives available for maritime nations to meet the Soviet maritime threat, the most promising one is the formation of regional naval forces which cooperate on the basis of regional mutual concerns.... forces which do not necessarily involve U.S. naval forces.....given the realities of U.S. economics and politics and the projected U.S. strategy, this alternative is the most practical and feasible one

- during the sessions that follow this address, I strongly urge all of you to give serious consideration to what I have suggested
  
- after this Symposium concludes I would urge you to continue to assess the changing maritime strategic situation, how it affects the world as a whole, and your own country and region in particular
  
- the practical alternatives available are limited and the maritime challenge is real
  
- there may be new, stimulating alternatives which I have not suggested ..... in any event, we all would do well to consider what can and must be done to preserve even the tenuous stability that we know now.