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Strategic Passages

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Requirements and Assessment Office

October 1987

Executive summary

Selection of the foremost strategic maritime passages in the world is achieved by examining fundamentals of military strategy and contemporary views of global strategy from U.S., NATO, and U.S.S.R. perspectives. This examination discloses six axiomatic conclusions:

- Defense and resupply of NATO is a major United States commitment.
- The economic vitality of the Alliance must be maintained.
- The Soviet Union crucially needs economic growth, particularly in the Far East.
- Since military power is founded upon economic vitality and endurance, the most important attribute of a maritime passage is the nature and volume of what passes through it during normal conditions, that is, the matrix attributes—traffic and peace use.
- The immense cost of man-made passages (canals) warrants them special attention. No arguments have been discovered that lessen their initial value to world commerce.
- Aside from defense and control of the canals, maritime passages affecting the major ports and flanks of Europe, as well as the Soviet Southern Sea Route, are crucial to economic survival and growth. That some maritime passages are important to both the Alliance and the Soviets gives them special significance.

From these six conclusions, 12 maritime passages are deemed to be crucial to policies of the major world powers: Bab el Mandeb, Dardanelles, English Channel, Formosa Strait, Great Channel, Korea Strait, Panama Canal, Strait of Gibraltar, Strait of Malacca, Straits of Florida, Suez Canal, and Yucatan Channel.

Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Straits and Canals	1
3.0	Concepts of Strategy	2
3.1	Fundamental Concepts	2
3.2	Current Perceptions of U.S. Strategy	3
3.3	Strategy and Ocean Science	3
4.0	U.S. Maritime Strategy	4
4.1	A Beginning	4
4.2	Basic Concepts	4
4.3	Chief of Naval Operations Viewpoint	5
4.4	The Bottom Line	7
5.0	North Atlantic Treaty Organization	7
5.1	The Atlantic Bridge	7
5.2	NATO and the U.S. Maritime Strategy	8
5.3	The Northern Flank	9
6.0	Soviet Strategy	10
6.1	Global Strategy and the TVD	10
6.2	Strategic Surprise	13
6.3	The Southern Sea Route	13
6.4	Naval Policy	15
6.5	Implications of Soviet Strategy	16
7.0	Selection Process for Strategic Passages	16
7.1	Candidate Passages	16
7.2	Passage Attributes	17
7.3	Matrix of Maritime Passages	18
7.4	Passage Selection	18
8.0	Twelve Strategic Passages	21
8.1	Bab el Mandeb	21
8.2	Dardanelles	21
8.3	English Channel	21
8.4	Formosa Strait	23
8.5	Great Channel	23
8.6	Korea Strait	23
✓8.7	Panama Canal	23
8.8	Strait of Gibraltar	24
8.9	Strait of Malacca	24
8.10	Straits of Florida	24
8.11	Suez Canal	25
8.12	Yucatan Channel	25
9.0	Bibliography	25
	Appendix: Law of the Sea	27

Strategic Passages

1.0 Introduction

Freedom of the seas is vital to the security of virtually every nation in the world. By weight, 98% of the trade of the democracies¹ is carried by sea; any disruption of that trade obviously diminishes the well-being of those countries.

Use of the world's oceans for economic, political, and military purposes is not limited to ships of the Free World; developing Third World nations and Communist Bloc nations also desire and need to use ocean routes. Table 1.1 (*World Almanac*, 1985) ranks by size the major world merchant fleets as of 1 January 1984. Although the Soviet Union is generally regarded as a "land" nation, the size of its merchant fleet (approximately 10% of the world fleet) belies that perception. The Soviet Union is acutely aware of marine traffic and its economic and political importance. Second to Panama in the number of registered vessels of 1000 gross tons or over, the U.S.S.R. is eighth in Deadweight tonnage (Dwt). Their present merchant marine policy features many relatively small freighters. Soviet interest in ocean trade is underscored by their progress in naval technology; of four nuclear-powered merchant ships in the world, the U.S.S.R. possesses two, of 18,172 Dwt and 13,366 Dwt.

To ensure a desirable future, the Free World must retain the right of free passage through the world's seas under all circumstances, including transit through narrow, well-defined bodies of water under the control of various nations. Preservation of this right entails allocation of appropriate protective resources: economic, political, or military. Since the means for adequate protection are always limited, it is crucial to identify the most important of these bodies of water to assure sufficient resources are allocated to their protection.

From both Free World and Soviet Bloc perspectives, the following analysis develops a rational mechanism for determining the foremost maritime passages. To rank order maritime passages, one must first ascertain those attributes upon which the utility of a passage can be measured; second, one must ascribe a value system to the attributes. Finally, the evaluated attributes are used as a template to retrieve a set of strategic passages from a larger set. In essence, this development examines an exhaustive list of the world's maritime passages in the context of current perceptions of Free World and Soviet strategy. The

mechanism, featuring a relational data base with easily changed parameters, has additional utility, as it will respond to other logical queries about global maritime passages.

Section 2.0 presents some basic definitions and concepts of maritime passages. Section 3.0 reviews elementary concepts of strategy. Sections 4.0, 5.0, and 6.0 examine current United States, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and Soviet strategy. Section 7.0 develops the logical selection process, and Section 8.0 lists and describes the foremost strategic passages.

2.0 Straits and Canals

Perusal of any world map reveals that much of the maritime trade passes through constrained, narrow bodies of water. In addition to maritime trade, significant military traffic frequently utilizes these same waterways; denied their use, a nation could be seriously threatened. For example, of the 15 largest United States ports, 9 are located on the Gulf Coast (*The World Almanac*, 1985) and are accessible only through the Straits of Florida or the Yucatan Channel. If either or both of these passages were denied to United States commercial or military traffic, it would precipitate a serious disruption of national policy. Such maritime waterways are herein defined as strategic passages: a narrow body of navigable water connecting two stretches of the high seas at which the territorial seas of two land areas meet and overlap, whose denied or contested use crucially impairs the conduct of national policy.

Under customary international law (International Court of Justice in the 1948 *Corfu Channel* case), both merchant ships and warships have, unless otherwise prescribed by treaty, a right of free passage "through straits used for international navigation between two parts of the high seas without previous authorization of a coastal state, provided that the passage is *innocent*." Except in this respect, the Geneva Convention of 1958 subjects the territorial sea in straits to the same regime as the territorial sea elsewhere. In time of war, a neutral littoral state may enforce reasonable means to protect the neutrality of its territorial waters within a strait. These means may include mine laying and compulsory pilotage, but the strait must be kept open to free navigation. When a coastal state is at war, it may close the strait to enemy shipping and vessels carrying contraband to the enemy, and may take all belligerent

Table 1.1. Merchant fleets of the world (as of 1 January 1984)

Countries	Total Number	Total Gross Tons	Dwt Tons	Vessel Type		
				Freight Number	Bulk Number	Tanker Number
Panama	3290	34617	57781	2100	730	430
U.S.S.R.	2497	17299	23157	1864	192	455
Greece	2454	39090	68612	1110	920	381
Liberia	2019	68093	131545	449	810	752
Japan	1712	36933	61191	682	490	525
U.S.	788	15713	24409	437	24	289
U.K.	685	16921	27251	250	138	287
Norway	529	18458	32470	125	135	248
All countries	25579	395325	666404	14268	5384	5548

measures that it would be authorized to employ in its other territorial waters or on the high seas. For more detailed research into the legal aspects of straits, a select bibliography for the *Law of the Sea*, published by the United Nations (1985), can be found in the appendix.

Canals are not subject to the same legal regime as straits; their width, length, and man-made characteristics set them apart. Canals connecting the two seas, used only for local traffic and untraversed by large seagoing vessels, are not of international significance (for example, the Baltic-White Sea Canal in the U.S.S.R. and the Gota Canal, connecting the North Sea and the Baltic).

3.0 Concepts of Strategy

As the world becomes an increasingly lawless place, defense of a nation and security of a nation come to share more and more alignments of interest. The military aspects of security are basically twofold: preparation for a general or limited war and the preservation of order. The planning and conduct of these two tasks require a good, workable strategy.

A real strategy is, above all, a choice among alternate ways of dealing with a particular situation or with a range of likely situations. In war, it is a guide for tactical planning. In peacetime, it should be a means of choosing the appropriate forces, force postures, and research goals.²

3.1 Fundamental concepts

Hart³ quotes two contemporary political leaders, who more than any one else in this century irrevocably altered the course of history, to underscore the foundations of political-military strategy.

The soundest strategy in war is to postpone operations until the moral disintegration of the enemy renders the delivery of the mortal blow both possible and easy.

V. I. Lenin

Our real wars will in fact all be fought before military operations begin.

How to achieve the moral breakdown of the enemy before the war has started—that is the problem that interests me.

A. Hitler

Hart defines strategy as the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy, concerned not merely with the movement of forces, but also with the effect. For the purpose of my analysis, I have broadened this definition to include coordination and direction of the resources of a nation, or a band of nations, toward the attainment of goals defined by fundamental policy.

A sound strategy is based upon very careful preparation prior to any physical engagement. This preparation includes positioning of forces, quantity and quality of forces, political maneuvering, economic maneuvering, and disruption and dislocation of opposing forces.

Success depends upon economy of force and deterrent effect, which are combined in a defensive-offensive method based on high mobility that carries the power of swift retort. Economy of force is based on surprise and mobility. Railways, roads, and ocean straits provide strategy with speed of movement, but without an accompanying *flexibility*—the other essential constituent of true mobility. Mobility and indirect approach are fundamental to achieving a superior military position.

There are substantial differences between indirect approach and surprise. Surprise in time, place, and force may disrupt an adversary, but may not necessarily achieve the broader objective of the indirect approach.

An important aspect of World War I was the decisive part that sea power had played, without any decisive battle at sea, in producing the enemy's collapse by economic pressure. Regarding the Dardanelles, German General Falkenhayn remarked, "If the straits between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea were not permanently closed to Entente traffic, all hope of a successful course of the war would be very considerably diminished. Russia would have been freed from her significant isolation . . . which offered a safer guarantee than military successes that sooner or later a crippling of the forces of this Titan must take place automatically." (This demonstrates the dangers of strategic isolation.)

Again during World War I, the British blockade of Imperial Germany exemplified a grand strategy of indirect approach to which no effective resistance was possible and of a type which incurred no risk except in its slowness of effect. The effect, true to the law of momentum, tended to gather speed as it continued, and at the end of 1917 the Central Powers were in a desperate situation.

3.2 Current Perceptions of U.S. Strategy

Dunn and Staudenmaier⁴ recently examined American strategy. Currently, United States defense policymakers are debating the merits of two competing strategies, continentalist and maritime, to determine whether one or the other can provide a remedy for a basic strategic dilemma. That is, how can the United States protect its interests in Europe without placing Free World interests outside Europe at risk and simultaneously avoid nuclear conflict? Although neither concept is prevailing at present, the outcome will establish national security foundations well into the next century.

Supporters of both concepts agree on one point: the strategic environment has changed dramatically in recent years; consequently, United States policy and concepts must be reexamined. Four factors support this conclusion.

- The United States no longer surpasses the rest of the world as a nuclear power.
- Soviet conventional military capabilities have improved markedly during the past two decades.
- The United States is no longer the world's unchallenged economic or political power.
- Traditional alliance structures have weakened as the United States and its allies have become increasingly dependent upon critical resources from politically unstable Third World areas.

The maritime strategy features three variants: the "official" Navy position articulated by Secretary of the Navy, John Lehman; the "manipulative" version; and the "unilateralist" version. In the Navy's view, a three-ocean fleet of 600 ships will achieve naval superiority over the Soviet Union and permit simultaneous operations in all major theaters if global war should occur. Possessing this capability, the United States fleet could project military power against a hostile shore and attack the Soviet Navy in its major ports on the Kola Peninsula and the Far East maritime provinces. This part of military strategy is called horizontal escalation. Horizontal escalation is founded upon three premises:

- The United States lacks the capability to defeat Soviet forces in areas where the Soviet Union might attempt to use its military power in the coming decade (for example, Southwest Asia).
- The Soviet Union is more brazen and willing to initiate military actions to threaten Free World interests than in the past. (This results from the United States losing vertical escalation dominance.)
- A strategy of horizontal escalation increases United States options. (That is, policymakers will not be linked

inextricably to the event and place of Soviet aggression.) Success of the maritime strategy is linked to three factors: suitability, feasibility, and acceptability. This strategy envisions the destruction or neutralization of the Soviet fleet as a proper military objective, allowing the United States to project its land, sea, and air power at the time and place of its choosing. Thus, Free World interests will be protected.

Strategies do not exist in a vacuum; the very existence of a strategy confirms the presence of another, opposing strategy. Since the development of these strategies is interdependent, it is necessary to examine both. Consistent with our definition of strategic passages, it is necessary to examine both United States and Soviet naval strategies to determine the crucial passages, whose use or denial could affect significantly the outcome of a global conflict.

Strategic passages are major elements of United States, NATO, and Soviet strategy. The essence of the current United States maritime strategy is global vigilance and commitment, which entails a massive naval effort. To fulfill effectively the ever-increasing requirements of this strategy, the United States Navy must function with limited resources. Success will depend upon innovative operations that include effective exploitation of the maritime environment.

3.3 Strategy and Ocean Science

The question of how well the United States can implement a chosen strategy⁵ must be placed in the context of such contemporary issues as

- our perceived national security interests,
- the competitors for and threats to those interests,
- the multilateral set of military and economic power balances existing today, and
- the limitations imposed by current and prospective technology. (This fourth issue is of particular interest to research and development organizations.)

Combat capability (the ability to achieve a specified wartime objective) results from the aggregation of four attributes:

- force structure—the numbers, size, and composition of the combat and support units that comprise the defense forces;
- modernization—the technical sophistication of forces, units, weapons systems, and equipment;
- readiness—the ability of a force, unit, weapons systems, or equipment to deliver the outputs for which it was designed; and
- sustainability—the "staying power" of forces, units, weapons systems, and equipment.

Combat readiness is also linked to strategic mobility. With cultural, economic, and political bonds extending across several oceans, the naval role in any national strategy is crucial. Current naval strategy focuses upon deterrence of war, particularly nuclear war. One aspect of this deterrence is the deployment of ballistic missile submarines; conversely, security against nuclear attack requires surveillance

of intruders and vigilance in all waterways and ports. Such monitoring includes all forms of antisubmarine and mine detection, as well as inspection of any unscheduled aircraft. Coping with Third World actions adds another dimension to this immense security task. Mining in the Red Sea and air attacks in the Persian Gulf aptly demonstrate the vulnerability of shipping to terrorism and local conflicts.

Alluded to previously, successful implementation of the maritime portion of a national strategy will depend upon effective development and use of ocean science and technology. The Secretary of the Navy, John Lehman, fully appreciates the need for this ocean science support: "Of all the nine principles of maritime power, geography is the most determinant, and geography overwhelmingly favors the Free World alliance."⁶

In a major policy statement,⁷ Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral J. D. Watkins, candidly declares, "The impact of the ocean environment upon tactical and strategic forces and their operations and system performance must be understood and accounted for to most effectively employ our Navy."

Among several policy points, Admiral Watkins stresses the need to

- "develop sensing, data assimilation, and distribution capabilities to describe the *operating environment* to our naval forces in global/near real-time basis by year 1995," and

- "consider appropriate *environmental factors* in Navy weapons systems from early design through test and evaluation to full operational capability."

An idealistic goal would be to obtain exhaustive environmental information covering all areas of the globe; realistically, resources will never be available to achieve this goal. A practical approach to the problem allocates scarce resources to measure and comprehend the ocean environment by partitioning and ranking the ocean areas. Maritime passages must rank very high, as vessel interdiction probabilities will be directly proportional to traffic density. This line of reasoning establishes the need for the following inquiry, namely, where are the foremost passages in the world, of vital importance to all maritime powers?

4.0 U.S. Maritime Strategy

Current U.S. Navy policy centers upon the Maritime Strategy, which in turn, adheres fully to NATO strategy, that is, the defense and resupply of Europe. Adequate defense of Europe entails containment of Soviet thrusts upon both the northern and the southern flanks of Europe.

Although a maritime power, the United States has lacked a coherent national ocean policy with a well-defined naval strategy component. According to an analysis by Stavridis,⁸ only token national ocean policy planning has occurred, and it has been sporadic and generally lacking in government support. Stavridis points out, "It is not the lack of ocean policies that is the issue; rather the problem is the lack of a comprehensive approach to setting ocean policies."

In peacetime, it is difficult to quantify and evaluate the extent to which national security goals are affected by the oceanborne movement of critical goods.⁹ Although no supplies need be moved to support military actions, critical materials must be received during peacetime to permit preparations for war, as well as to supply the domestic economy. One example of the present U.S. policy (or lack of it) is the lack of a U.S. dry bulk fleet; currently, more than 96% of the dry bulk commodities imported by the United States are transported by foreign-flag ships.

The traditional role of the U.S. Navy includes four major tasks: sea control, power projection, strategic deterrence, and naval presence. Naval strategy is the large-scale planning undertaken to fulfill established and defined national policies. As the United States becomes more involved in ocean activity, naval strategy will likewise be more involved with broader issues of national ocean policy.

4.1 A Beginning

Shortly after the beginning of the first Reagan administration, Secretary of the Navy, John Lehman, remarked¹⁰ that the new administration was committed to a major shift in naval strategy from defensive deployment of approximately 400 ships to forward defense with 600-plus vessels to destroy Soviet vessels near their home ports. Later in 1982, he reiterated the point, "What I have said is that we have to be able to gain control of the Norwegian Sea. First, you've got to go up there with submarines and you'll need land-based air support. But ultimately you've got to be able to support Norway and prevent Norway from being used as a main operating base against NATO."

More recently, in February 1984,⁶ Secretary Lehman laid down "Nine Principles for the Future of American Maritime Power":

- Coherent, realistic national strategy
- Strong national will
- Character of government institutions
- Superior military leadership
- Adequate military material strength
- Superior allied naval forces
- Integration of specific geography and naval strategy
- Forward naval employment strategy
- Sealift

In the context of examining the why and where of strategic passages, the last three principles are of concern. NATO commitments require both shipping (sealift) and naval presence (forward naval employment strategy). These commitments can be effected more economically through appreciation and utilization of area geography and oceanography, particularly at choke points and strategic passages.

4.2 Basic Concepts

The maritime strategy reflects concepts that have long been understood within the U.S. Navy; it is neither a radical innovation nor a series of prescriptions imposed

from above. It has, however, three new features:

- It is explicit.
- It is a choice from among many ideas.
- It is intended to be a long-term choice.

Strategy serves three related purposes:

- It is the basis for a choice of programs.
- It is a basis for justifying the Navy's choices to the U.S. defense establishment and to the U.S. Government.

If future wars never escalate to nuclear use (as most Americans believe), such naval contributions as strategic mobility and the security of sea lanes will become increasingly important in a protracted war. For that matter, the sea lanes will serve to preserve the security of the West's global industrial base, which will become a vital wartime priority as the war continues.

- It helps make the Navy's own operations and its own thinking more coherent.

The new strategy demands increased attention to such issues as interoperability and commonality of communication links, both interservice and interallied. Today's political situation demands three major capabilities from the Navy, to be achieved simultaneously and within severe limitations on its resources:

- *Direct attack on Soviet forces.* The forward offense posture of the new maritime strategy draws Soviet threats away from the sea lanes by forcing the Soviets to defend their SSBN force, surface forces, and land bases. By moving into areas the Soviets consider vital, U.S. forces might tie down the Soviets or force them into unprofitable engagements.

- *Protection of sea lanes.* A major tenet of sea lane protection is air superiority, which must be provided by sea-based aircraft to be effective (i.e., reaction time is crucial). So much of the West's industrial base is now located in East Asia that the defense of that region may be linked inextricably with the defense of Europe.

- *Projection of power into the Third World.* Although the main United States planning scenario remains a NATO war, warfare is more likely to occur in the Third World. (Witness the Falklands and the Persian Gulf.)

The maritime strategy is predicated upon global conflict and forward deployment of Alliance forces. This strategy is dedicated to deterrence; it is cost-effective, since history has demonstrated that prevention is far cheaper than the cure for almost any circumstance. Consequently, these forces will be dispersed and only limited resources will be available in any particular theater of operations. Maximum effectiveness must be achieved for all deployed systems. Robust design and adequate operator training are necessary. In addition, the ability to effectively operate in a variety of environments is essential. This ability is linked to comprehension and utilization of diverse oceanographic factors. Comprehension derives from sound theory and experimental verification programs, both expensive in resources. Since resources are limited, they must be focused upon regions of crucial importance in naval warfare, namely, strategic passages.

4.3 Chief of Naval Operations Viewpoint

Admiral J. D. Watkins has placed U.S. maritime strategy in a proper perspective with six unambiguous statements:¹¹

- It is a *global* strategy.
- It is a *forward* strategy.
- It is a *deterrent* strategy.
- It is an *alliance* strategy.
- It is a *flexible* strategy.
- It is a *nonnuclear* strategy.

This maritime strategy complements the overall strategy, which is founded on three pillars: *deterrence, forward defense, and alliance solidarity.*

Preparation for global war is the critical element in ensuring deterrence, but U.S. peacetime operations and response in time of crisis are also crucial contributions in deterrence and stability; that is, Maritime Strategy is a stability-seeking, status quo policy.

Today, the continuing and widespread existence of localized conflicts and crises, mostly in the Third World, often have global implications. These conflicts and other crises with the potential to break into hostilities frequently involve U. S. and Allied interests. Transcending the interests of states directly involved, these confrontations often serve as backdrop for potentially more serious conflicts between major powers. A fundamental component of the nation's success in deterring war with the Soviet Union depends upon United States' ability to stabilize and control escalation in Third World crises.

The CNO points out that the U.S. Navy devotes much of its effort to maintaining this stability. Potential crises and the aftermath of crises have increasingly defined the location and character of forward deployments. The U.S. Navy maintains a continual presence in the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, and the Caribbean, as well as the more traditional forward deployments to the Mediterranean and the Western Pacific. U.S. interests and commitments are worldwide, and increasingly focus on the Third World. U.S. economy and security require oil from the Persian Gulf and Caribbean Sea, and strategic minerals from southern Africa; trade with nations of the Pacific Basin now surpass that with Europe.

The Soviets also have worldwide interests and commitments; thus, naval forces must be prepared to encounter high-technology, combined-arms threats in virtually every ocean of the world. Their methods for extending and protecting these interests include support and encouragement of limited warfare by Cuban, Libyan, Syrian, and North Korean proxies, as well as direct crisis response by their own forces. They also have enhanced their access to air and naval facilities in key strategic locations, including Ethiopia, South Yemen, Cuba, and Vietnam.

They steadily improve their ability to sever vital sea lines of communication, while improving their ability to counter U. S. crisis reaction moves. For example, Moscow recently established its first fully developed overseas base at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam. From this base Soviet forces can strike

key United States and friendly forces and installations as far north as Hong Kong.

A tenet of their ideology, the Soviets presume a future war with the West will be global in scope, violent, and decisive. The probable centerpiece of Soviet strategy in global war would be a combined-arms assault against Europe, where they would seek a quick and decisive victory. As prudent military planners, the Soviets would, of course, prefer to concentrate on a single theater; a central premise of U. S. strategy is to deny them such an option.

Some Soviet overseas clients and surrogates outside the Warsaw Pact are located close to critical sea lines of communication and conceivably could join in an attack. Any Western strategy must, of necessity, hedge against such a third-country involvement.

While Soviet ground and air forces conduct a massive offensive, a critical Soviet Navy role in a future conflict would be to protect the Soviet homeland and their ballistic missile submarines, which provide the Soviets with their ultimate strategic reserve. Locating and destroying Western sea-based nuclear assets, such as aircraft carriers and submarines, is the highest priority of the Soviet Navy. Interdicting sea lines of communication or supporting the Soviet Army, while important, will probably be secondary, at least at the war's start.

This view of the Soviet Navy's role in overall Soviet strategy suggests that the bulk of Soviet naval forces will initially deploy in areas near the Soviet Union, with only a small fraction deployed forward. Numerous advantages accrue from this strategy:

- short lines of logistics and communications,
- short deployment time,
- minimize build-up and surge indications,
- defensive posture is economical, and
- attack can occur with minimum warning.

One key goal of U.S. peacetime strategy is to further international stability through support of regional balances of power. The more stable the international environment, the lower the probability that the Soviets will risk war with the West.

The heart of U.S. Maritime Strategy is crisis response. If war with the Soviets occurs, it will probably result from a crisis that escalates out of control. U.S. ability to contain and control crises is an important factor in preventing global conflict.

Should war come, the Soviets would prefer to use their massive ground force advantage against Europe without having to concern themselves with a global conflict or with actions on their flanks. To countervail this strategy, the U.S. must ensure the Soviets will have to face the prospect of prolonged global conflict. This countervailing maritime strategy comprises three phases.

4.3.1 Deterrence or the Transition to War

The initial phase of the maritime strategy would be triggered by recognition that a specific international situation

has the potential to grow to a global superpower confrontation. (A false alarm can be costly, leading to the "cry wolf" syndrome; that is, the United States will be in a reaction mode and the Soviets will surely test our reaction and resolve.)

The goal of this phase is deterrence. Deterrence can be achieved by preparing for the transition to war, specifically, to global war. Therefore, such preparations are an integral feature of this phase.

Keys to the success of both the initial phase and the strategy as a whole are speed and decisiveness in national decisionmaking. Timely, accurate intelligence coupled with a reliable, secure command, control, and communications system is essential. Procrastination here can be fatal; however, there is a heavy cost for reacting prematurely and rashly.

Even though a substantial fraction of the Fleet is forward deployed in peacetime, prompt decisions are needed to permit rapid forward deployment of additional forces in crisis. This requirement underscores the importance of the Panama and Suez Canals in facilitating repositioning.

The need for forward movement is obvious. Aggressive forward movement of antisubmarine warfare forces, both submarine and maritime patrol aircraft, will force Soviet submarines to retreat into defensive bastions to protect their ballistic missile submarines. This move denies the Soviets the option of a massive, early attempt to interdict our sea lines of communication and counters such operations that the Soviets might undertake against them.

Moving one Marine amphibious brigade by air to rendezvous with its prepositioned equipment and reinforce Norway provides a convincing signal of Alliance solidarity. However, if this gambit fails, the Alliance may collapse.

Deployments to the Western Pacific directly enhance deterrence, including deterrence of an attack in Europe, by providing a clear indication that, should war come, the Soviets will not be able to ignore any region of the globe. Of course, dispersing our resources increases our risk in the central theater.

In addition to allowing rapid deployment, speed and decisiveness in national decision making are crucial to the strategy's overall execution. As more functions are transferred to the reserve forces, execution of the President's authority to call reservists becomes increasingly crucial to successful implementation of the strategy. The short training period allowed these personnel creates risk. For example, the maritime strategy includes a Memorandum of Agreement with the U.S. Coast Guard to establish Maritime Defense Zones. Under this agreement, Coast Guard units, combined with both active and reserve naval forces, will defend harbors and shipping lanes along U.S. coasts in time of war.

An important aspect of the strategy's initial phase is sealift. In 1984, the Secretary of the Navy established sealift as the third primary mission of the Navy, along with sea control and power projection. This increased emphasis recognizes the importance of both economic and military resupply. As a consequence of the present inventory of

available ships and the limited ship-building capacity of American shipyards, the U.S. can neither tolerate attrition typical of World War II nor provide adequate sealift to transport requisite strategic raw materials. Therefore, early and effective uses of existing sealift are essential.

4.3.2 Seizing the Initiative

This is the second phase of the strategy. If deterrence fails and a crisis erupts into war, the Soviets will probably focus their offensive on Central Europe, while maintaining a defensive posture elsewhere. U.S. and Alliance maritime forces must counter the first salvo, wear down the enemy forces, protect sea lines of communication, continue reinforcement and resupply, and improve positioning.

It will be essential to conduct forward operations with attack submarines, as well as to establish barriers at key world choke points using maritime patrol aircraft, mines, attack submarines, or sonobuoys to prevent leakage of enemy forces into the open ocean where the Western Alliance's resupply can be threatened.

Logistics and sustainability are integral to the success of any strategy; they are especially vital in this one, which demands aggressive, sustained, forward operations.

4.3.3 Carrying the Fight to the Enemy

In the third and final phase of the maritime strategy, U.S. forces would endeavor to complete the destruction of all the Soviet fleets that was begun in the second phase. This action allows the U.S. to threaten the homeland bases and the support structure of the Soviet Navy in all theaters, with both air and amphibious power.

4.4 The Bottom Line

Success of the maritime strategy depends on early reaction to crisis and the political will to make difficult decisions early. As history has frequently demonstrated, survival depends upon both superior intelligence and leadership.

5.0 North Atlantic Treaty Organization

The evolving Communist threat in postwar Europe prompted the Western Allies to form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Signed into being on 24 August 1949, this treaty declared: *An armed attack against one or more of them in Europe and North America shall be considered an attack against all.*

Membership now includes the United States, Canada, Belgium, Denmark, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, West Germany, and Spain.

The NATO structure comprises a Council and a Military Committee of three commands: Allied Command Europe, Allied Command Atlantic, and Allied Command Channel.

The four principal tasks of the Allied Command Atlantic are to

- control the Atlantic Ocean sea lines of communication,

- protect reinforcement and resupply shipping,
- safeguard the seaborne trade of the Alliance, and
- provide support for Allied Command Europe and the Channel Command.

These tasks are embedded in three planned campaigns:

- The Norwegian Sea campaign has the goal of supporting NATO forces on the Northern Flank and preventing enemy amphibious landings on NATO territory.

- The battle for the Atlantic lifelines is intended to secure the vital sea lines of communications for NATO forces in Europe, as well as to protect the economic lifelines of the Alliance.

- The battle for the shallow seas seeks to maintain control of the Baltic Sea, the English Channel, and the North Sea. Most trans-Atlantic shipping must ultimately pass through these areas.

Mining¹² can be employed to take advantage of the restrictive geography that limits the free access of Warsaw Pact forces to the open ocean. The Soviet Baltic Fleet could be controlled initially by a series of national minefields, which are essentially defensive and protective. These minefields are supplemented by a NATO plan that aims to close the Baltic exits to Warsaw Pact vessels and lay anti-invasion mines.

With current assets, NATO can close off only the Baltic and Black Seas, implement a very limited number of deep-water barriers, and conduct small-scale protective and defensive mining.

On the other hand, Soviet mining capability and the environmental conditions on both sides of the Atlantic make NATO's coastal waters and the use of the deep-water approaches to them very vulnerable. The Soviets recognize this situation, disdaining the German strategy of attacking Allied shipping in the open ocean. The Soviet stockpile of sea mines totals approximately 250,000; the majority of these mines are of recent vintage.

Soviet defensive minefields could be expected across choke points and sea access routes; offensive mining could be directed at the Baltic Sea, Allied submarine bases, approaches to the English Channel, the southern North Sea, ports in Greece and Turkey, and the Eastern seaboard of the United States, including the Straits of Florida.

Currently, the best mine countermeasure is to keep minelaying assets away from areas of significant interest.

Of historical note, belligerents laid 235,000 mines during World War I and 635,000 mines in World War II.

5.1 The Atlantic Bridge

A common view in the northern hemisphere is that "the Atlantic bridge between North America and Europe is now, and ever shall be, the linchpin in the structure of political, economic, and military ties which underpin the world order."¹³

Lessons from World War II and NATO experiences confirmed two truisms:

- It costs much more to win a war than it does to prevent it.

- The security of both North America and Europe are inseparable and can be decoupled only at the peril of both.

The Atlantic is a major scene of economic activity. At any given moment, night or day, about 2000 vessels are steaming across this ocean and almost 2900 are in harbor. In 1982, almost 700 million tons of cargo were shipped through U.S., Gulf, and Atlantic ports, and almost 100 million tons through Canadian ports. Consider then, the results of the Soviet strategy that port denial (at either end of the sea route) is more cost effective than open-sea engagements. It is also worth noting that in the last few years, oil imports from OPEC to Western Europe have declined substantially. North Sea production has reduced European dependence on Middle East oil.

Security of the Atlantic sea lines of communication under various conditions of peace, crisis, or war is an integral part of the defense of Western Europe. It is essential to NATO's land defense; the better able NATO is to defend itself on land, the better able it must be to defend itself at sea, particularly in the northeast Atlantic. While NATO could win in the Atlantic and still lose a war, it could not lose there and win the war. Deterrence is enhanced to the extent that the generally accepted perception is that NATO can maintain its sea lines of communication to and from Europe under all conditions.

Three major changes have affected the maritime environment:

- the emergence of the Soviet Union as a maritime power,
- the impact of nuclear weapons, and
- the growth of global interdependence.

The cumulative effect of these factors will likely portend trouble for the future security of NATO countries.

Soviet maritime capability can now disrupt NATO use of the sea as a

- primary means for transporting resources and goods,
- medium for the development and exploitation of resources,
- secure base for the nuclear deterrent,
- required right of way for the projection abroad of conventional military force, and
- bridge for the reinforcement and resupply of Western Europe in time of emergency.

Thus, the Soviets confront the West with both an economic and a political challenge. The total portion of the Soviet and East European merchant fleet is not overwhelming; however, their share of specific routes is significant: 20% between Europe and North America, 35% between Northern Europe and the Mediterranean, 25% between Northern Europe and the west coast of Latin America, and 20% between the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Mexico.

Nuclear weapons, particularly nuclear parity, have changed the entire context of war. These awesome weapons have rendered North America as vulnerable as Western Europe to Soviet military power. Their growing numbers, availability, and destructive power have made nuclear war

an extremely hazardous option, which places NATO strategy in a quandary. Its earlier doctrine of massive nuclear retaliation is no longer plausible, but it also lacks the capability for a conventional defense of Europe. Planners are trapped between a short war, based on early use of nuclear weapons, and a long war, involving the reinforcement and supply by sea of NATO forces in Europe.

There is increasing international interdependence for the redistribution of resources, virtually all of which must be moved by sea. Few nations possess all the food, energy, and mineral resources necessary for continued development. Even the largest countries are not self-sufficient; they need trading partners, friends, and allies. This trend toward global interdependence is bound to bring significant changes in both the military and civilian uses of the seas for the remainder of this century. The rights of free and unencumbered passage for their ships will be of increasing importance to the NATO Allies as world trade grows.

At the same time, Third World countries will become increasingly involved in both the use and control of the seas and will press the developed countries for a greater share of the economic benefits of the seas. As technology makes all surface ships more vulnerable, the Third World countries will also possess a greater capability to interfere with the free passage of both military and commercial vessels. At the same time, the Soviet Union can be expected to expand its own uses of the seas for military, political, and economic purposes.

5.2 NATO and the U.S. Maritime Strategy

In both World War I and World War II, the major task of the U.S. Navy was to protect the movement of men and material to Europe. In these wars, prepositioned German submarine and other maritime assets caused major damage in the early phases of the war. However, the lack of air superiority doomed German efforts at severing these sea lines of communication. Eventually, the losses were so great that the German submarine fleet was recalled from the Atlantic to await the production of snorkel-equipped submarines. The strategy of sailing ships in convoy, protected by powerful surface and air escorts, and of waiting for the German attackers to approach the massed formation was the most effective way of defeating the submarine threat.

Nuclear weapons and NATO are two reasons why this earlier strategy is no longer appropriate.

As ballistic missile submarines became operational within the U.S. Fleet, the threat of a nuclear strike came to dominate Soviet strategy. This new doctrine is evident in the priority assigned to the construction of a Soviet SSBN force and the emphasis on construction of ASW forces to

- destroy enemy SSBNs, and
- protect Soviet SSBNs from NATO submarines.

Thus, although the German submarine force had a single mission—the interdiction of Allied shipping—the Soviet force has three missions, and the interdiction of sea lines

of communication is third in priority. The other aspect differentiating today's situation from that of World War II is U.S. membership in NATO. Commitment to defend Allied territory and immediate involvement in the war requires a greater role for U.S. naval forces in support of the European land battle at the beginning of the war than occurred during World War II.

Control of northern Norway and the Norwegian Sea is essential for Soviet naval operations in the North Atlantic. The Soviet Northern Fleet is the only naval force with a realistic possibility of operating in the North Atlantic. Most of their striking power is in this fleet. As of 1983, 64% of the Soviet Typhoon, Delta I-III, and Yankee SSBNs, and 66% of the Soviet Navy's post-1967 combat ships operated out of the Kola Peninsula and White Sea ports. To reach the Atlantic, these forces must proceed around the northern cape of Norway, across 1000 miles of the Norwegian Sea, and through the Greenland-Iceland-Norway (GIN) gap, a difficult proposition at best. Conversely, Soviet control of this region would place extreme pressure on both the European northern flank and the North Atlantic sea lines of communication.¹⁴

As mentioned, the maritime strategy embraces five principles:

- non-nuclear,
- protracted coalition war with sequential and rollback operations,
- offensive pressure to protect sea lines of communication,
- war termination leverage, and
- control of the seas to apply effects of a massive Western mobilization (U.S. \$1 trillion per year, plus non-European Allies \$500 million per year).

The maritime strategy adds to Soviet uncertainty¹⁵ by declaring that regardless of how well the Soviets are doing on the Central Front, the U.S. naval policy is to

- apply pressure globally,
- possibly change the nuclear balance,
- prolong the war,
- apply to Europe the effects of U.S. mobilization,
- assist in the mobilization of Japan and other non-European Allies,
- possibly transport high technology military items to the Peoples Republic of China,
- apply pressure on the Soviet flanks,
- attack Soviet bases,
- destroy the Soviet Navy, and
- prevent the Soviet use of any ocean for any reason.

These capabilities point to a conflict of different dimensions from a World War II-type blitzkrieg on the Central front. In deterrent terms, this increases Soviet uncertainty and complicates Soviet planning. To prevail against the maritime strategy, the Soviets must achieve two very difficult tasks: break the center, and seize the flanks to choke down the massive reinforcements which will be coming across the sea lines of communication.

5.3 The Northern Flank

The Reagan administration is committed to a major shift in naval strategy, from defensive deployment of 400 ships to defend the sea lines of communication to forward defense with 600-plus ships to destroy Soviet vessels near their home ports. Virtually all analysts agree that the best strategy would be to gain control of the Norwegian Sea.¹⁰

Perception of the utility of the U.S. maritime strategy, relative to the protection of Northern Europe, depends upon geography, economic development, and the political actions of the U.S., the Soviets, and the Europeans. The issue is not at all clear to the Europeans, whether this new strategy represents a U.S. move toward a clear commitment to European defense or a destabilizing and dangerous step that will increase the risk of war.¹⁶

Nordic Europe faces a fundamental dilemma: how to manage the prospect of aggressive Soviet action—accommodation or a strong defense within NATO. Resolution of this dilemma is linked to the perception of the Forward Maritime Strategy. The strategy is ambiguous and evolutionary. Its basis is perceived to be one or more of the following doctrines:

- funding,
- deployment,
- horizontal escalation,
- conventional war, or
- conventional strategic defense.

The last concept is most troublesome for Northern Europe. Antisubmarine warfare is a prominent feature of this strategy, possibly posing a threat to Soviet nuclear missile submarines and thus destabilizing the political situation. A major trend in arms control in recent years has been the importance of strengthening what has become known as "crisis stability": the belief that either side, faced with the vulnerability of a large percentage of its strategic forces, will be tempted to launch a presumptive nuclear strike in a crisis.

Recognition of Norway and the Norwegian Sea as the key to the defense of Europe is now commonly accepted as conventional wisdom. How this defense would be effected, however, is still a subject for debate. NATO's successful defense of Norway hinges upon control of the sea and air space north of the GIN line to enable the rapid reinforcement of Norway.¹⁷

Reality must eventually be faced. North of the GIN line, the Soviets presently predominate on, above, and beneath the sea. On land, Soviet forces significantly outweigh the Norwegian forces tasked with the defense of the northern region. With the balance of power on the Northern Flank in favor of the Soviets, the outcome of a Soviet thrust into Norway could easily be decided before NATO could respond.

To overcome this deficiency, NATO's peacetime presence in the area needs to be increased, and the reaction time required to reinforce the region needs to be reduced.

The North Cape region of Norway is obviously of some importance, since the Soviets must pass by it on the way

to the Atlantic. Because of sea ice, there is a 130-mile-wide, ice-free passage to Murmansk in the winter. In summer, the width of this passage increases to 300 miles.

Soviet control of northern Norway would virtually assure their dominance in the Norwegian Sea down to the GIN line and would push back the frontier of NATO sea-launched missiles into the North Atlantic. This move would provide for an in-depth Soviet projection of surface and subsurface interdiction of the NATO Atlantic lifeline and would place the resupply of Europe in extreme peril.

The Soviets have two major fleets in Nordic Europe, the Northern Fleet and the Baltic Fleet. The former possesses the most powerful strike capability of the four Soviet fleets, whereas the latter is largest in total number of vessels and manpower. The principal strength of the Baltic Fleet is found in mine warfare and ground support operations (amphibious).

NATO's naval presence is generally limited to deployments of the 7-9 vessel Standing Naval Force Atlantic (StaNavForLant), operating under Allied Command Atlantic. Because of its responsibilities in all of Allied Command Atlantic's area of operation, this force is not focused on the Norwegian Sea.

The most serious threat to reinforcing the Northern Flank is Soviet aviation. The key to battle for the Norwegian Sea would be the effectiveness of Soviet bomber coordination, on one hand, and of Allied antimissile systems and fighter aircraft, on the other.

Although the North Atlantic seas are extremely rough, the Norwegian Sea is not as treacherous. From the standpoint of men and equipment, the environment is more tolerable to operate in the Norwegian Sea than to fight through the North Atlantic to recapture it.

A key element in determining NATO's capability to repel a Soviet assault in Norway is the amount of warning time that strategic intelligence would be able to provide to NATO's governmental decision makers. Regardless of the amount of warning time, the contribution of naval forces to Norway's defense will be critical.¹⁸

6.0 Soviet Strategy

So far, we have examined U.S. and NATO perspectives of the global situation; the Soviet viewpoint is somewhat different and thereby lies the danger of misinterpretation of intent.

6.1 Global Strategy and the TVD

Although the West (that is, NATO) considers that a large-scale war would be a world war, only Europe has been divided into theaters. This follows because NATO was conceived in 1949 to defend only Western Europe, North America, and the North Atlantic. Also, following the British and French debacle in the Suez War, British withdrawal from Aden and French withdrawal from Indochina, all in the 1950s, European power "East of Suez" declined to almost nothing.

In marked contrast to the NATO perspective, the interests of the Soviet Union are truly global and far-reaching.¹⁹ In speaking of the Soviet Union and its theatres, Western concepts do not apply.

Soviet specialists believe that war may break out anywhere and quickly spread either to other parts of the planet or to the whole planet. For many reasons, the Soviets do not proclaim their strategy to the world; however, a glimpse of Soviet strategy is revealed in their partitioning of the world into 16 TVDs (military-geographical zones). (TVD is the Soviet acronym for theater of actions on a strategic scale.) Figure 6.1 shows these TVDs to be divided into several categories: TVD I, the Central Strategic Region (CSR) surrounding Moscow; Continental TVDs; Oceanic TVDs; and Maritime TVDs.

The term, TVD, evolved through several changes of meaning, but was eventually defined as "part of a continental territory with its coastal waters, inland seas, and air space (Continental TVD), or the water areas of one ocean, including islands, adjoining seas, and coastal land belts (Oceanic TVD) within the boundaries of which strategic groupings of armed forces may be deployed and military operations carried out." Continental TVDs include land and coastal waters, and oceanic TVDs include water areas and coasts; thus, coastlines and continental shelves belong to both continental and oceanic TVDs. The third TVD category of significance is the Maritime TVD, which includes only two zones—the Caribbean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, zones 15 and 16, respectively.

Numbering and boundaries of the TVDs reveals something of the Soviet world perspective. The boundaries are not made public because they reflect the global interests of the Soviet Union. Numbering implies a ranking of priority. As might be expected, the Soviet capitol and industrial complex is Zone 1 (Central Strategic Region), and its chief protagonists, North America and Europe, are Zones 2 and 3, respectively. Thus, North America and not Europe represents the principal threat to the U.S.S.R. Soviet East Asia is Zone 4, Southwest Asia is Zone 5, and Southeast Asia is Zone 6.

After NATO, zones 4, 5, and 6 constitute a major concern for the Soviets. Of the Oceanic TVDs, top ranked is the Arctic Ocean (Zone 11), followed by the Pacific Ocean, (Zone 12), the Atlantic Ocean, (Zone 13) and, finally, the Indian Ocean, (Zone 14). If zone numbering is indeed a ranking of region, then the ranking of the Caribbean Sea ahead of the Mediterranean is interesting!

The boundaries of these TVDs is also revealing. For example, the Western TVD (Europe), Figure 6.2, extends from Novaya Zemlya in the Arctic Ocean southward through Morocco. This extent is interesting because, at its northern and southern extremities, it includes a Soviet egress passage, Proliv Karskiye Vorota, and a major Allied sea line of communication, the Strait of Gibraltar, respectively. To the southeast, the Western TVD, Zone 3, also includes the Turkish Straits (Dardanelles and Bosphorus), a key passage in the Soviet Southern Sea Route.

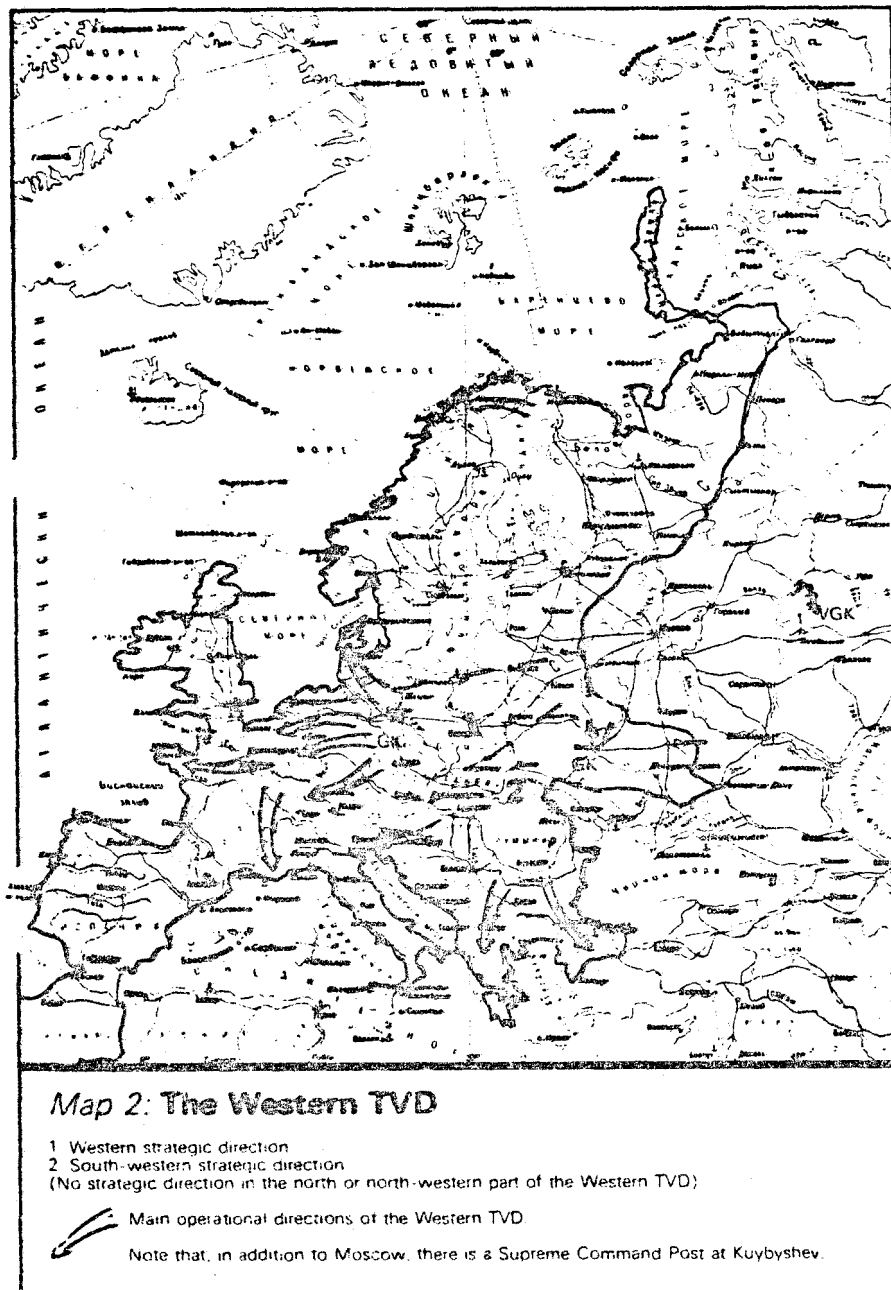


Figure 6.2. The Western TVD (after Suvorov¹⁹).

These clues are of strategic importance. The Soviet military consider the most important principle of war to be the concentration of forces and effort in the decisive place at the decisive moment. This principle also requires the concentration of the most capable generals and marshals at the place where the outcome of the war is to be decided.

In the opinion of Soviet leadership, a new war will move much more rapidly than previous ones, loss of communications at all levels will be common, and crises will arise constantly. The importance of flexibility in strategic com-

mand and control will grow, as will the necessity of being able to unite at a decisive moment various types of forces under a command with full powers and the knowledge of local circumstances.

A new term, "strategic offensive," has appeared recently in Soviet military jargon. The Soviet General Staff is preparing operations that will surpass in scale, intensity, and speed anything known in the past, including the massive World War II operations at Stalingrad and Kursk.

Of the five Soviet armed services, Strategic Rocket Forces, PVO (Air Defense), Ground Forces, Air Forces,

and Navy, the Strategic Rocket Forces is the most important because it is designed for battle with the main enemy, North America (Zone 2). They must be permanently prepared to carry out the foremost strategic operations—namely, the use of strategic nuclear forces to destroy the enemy's state and military organs, military-industrial complexes, and nuclear forces.

6.2 Strategic Surprise

Strategic surprise²⁰ is defined as concealment of the intention to launch an offensive and/or its timing. It is achieved through "large-scale deceptive actions, regroupings, and concentrations, concealing troops and installations, and misinforming the enemy."

Although weaker than NATO in population, wealth, industrial power and technological progress, the Soviets do not conclude that a war against NATO cannot be won. Although lacking in military potential, their superiority in currently deployed military strength points to a conclusion that such a war must be won very quickly, in its initial period. This position is defined to be "the period of time which elapses between the start of hostilities and the completion by the combatants of their mobilization, concentration, and deployment."

In essence, the Soviets must seize a vital area of NATO (for example, West Germany) and destroy key combat groupings before NATO can either complete its defensive preparations or agree on the use of nuclear weapons.

The Soviets identify five elements for a quick victory:

- surprise,
- a heavy blow,
- a rapid advance,
- simultaneous attacks throughout the enemy's depth,
- air superiority.

Of these five elements, surprise is the most important to naval planners. Surprise can confer five advantages to the Soviets:

- Surprise preempts NATO reinforcement plans and renders them largely unworkable.
- Surprise makes it possible to achieve at least a limited strategic objective with much smaller forces than would be required against a prepared enemy.
- Surprise makes it easier to further disrupt by interposing forces between the enemy forces and their line of retreat or source of supply, thus prolonging the effects of surprise.
- Surprise lessens the logistic burden and the number of casualties in offensive operations.
- Surprise avoids inadvertent disclosure of attack plans by the Warsaw Pact.

Historically, the Soviets have been very successful in implementing such measures. World War II campaigns against both the Germans and the Japanese, and the Cold War actions against Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Afghanistan, and Poland demonstrate their ability to achieve strategic surprise. To ignore this military pattern is to invite disaster.

6.3 The Southern Sea Route

Intertwined with Soviet military strategy is a strategy of economic growth and development, which must also be addressed. The Soviet Union's economy features two fundamental conditions:

- It is insulated from the direct effects of international supply and demand.
- It tends to be self-sufficient.

Since the year 1700, the Soviets have sought a "warm-water" port on the Indian Ocean. This desire has not waned with time. Established briefly during World War II, a sea-land route through Iran and the Indian Ocean (Fig. 6.3) demonstrated the tremendous utility of Soviet access to ice-free ports. (Churchill regarded transportation of Western arms to the Soviet Union by this route as even more important than Western access to Iranian oil.²¹)

This benefit was clearly understood by the Soviets; the focus of their strategy in Southwest Asia is not oil, but sea lines of communication. Their goals appear to be expansion of growth in efficiency and protection of the Soviet Union's geostrategic lines of communication that run through, or near, Southwest Asia.

Utilization and dependency upon the "Southern Sea Route" (Figs. 6.3 and 6.4) has increased since the beginning of this century to the point where Soviet national policy and planning depend upon this route through the Indian Ocean. This dependency has been fueled by the steady economic, political, and military developments in the Soviet Far East and the need to aid client states bordering the Indian Ocean.

Contrary to the United States concept of intercontinental strategy, the Soviets develop strategy on an *intracontinental* basis. Their political and military strategy is linked inextricably to the map (Fig. 6.1), principally, the map of Eurasia and the southern half of the eastern hemisphere.

The present transportation system of the Soviet Union is underdeveloped, deficient, and costly. In comparison with the West, all forms of land transportation in the U.S.S.R. bear heavy loads.

During the past two decades, sea transportation has increased in importance for both the economic and the military aspects of Soviet life. In 1950, railways carried 85% of Soviet freight; by 1980, this figure declined to 57%.

The U.S.S.R. has five major industrial regions: the Northwest, the Ukraine, the Urals, the Kuznetsk Basin, and the Komsomolsk region. The Urals and eastern regions represent a growing portion of the Soviet economy; from 1928 to 1960, the population increased from 23% to 32%, while industrial production rose from 9% to 27%. These changes have generated massive east-west traffic flows. The most critical problem is the transportation that *must* connect the European U.S.S.R. to the Asiatic, that is, the Komsomolsk and Khabarovsk regions in the Far East. There are no all-weather, hard surface, through roads between these two parts of the Soviet Union. All transportation must go by rail or air, or by sea through the Indian Ocean. Also, the transportation cost per ton is cheaper by



Figure 6.3. Southern Sea Route (after Westwood²¹).

sea, although the sea route via the Suez Canal is over twice as long as the overland rail route.

Internal air and land transportation links have proved inadequate to transfer the volume of freight and the people needed for the continued defense and development of the Soviet Far East; consequently, the Indian Ocean route is vital to Soviet interests. Control of the Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan (IAP) region offers protection for a large portion

of the Southern Sea Route with the added potential benefit of denying this route to Soviet adversaries.

Air distances from southern U.S.S.R. to the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf are 800 miles and 600 miles, respectively. Airfields in Afghanistan are closer still; thus, establishing Soviet air superiority over this region presents no major problem.