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*From Our March 1974 Issue . . .*

## Missions of the U.S. Navy

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Vice Admiral Stansfield Turner, U.S. Navy

**O**BSERVERS OF MILITARY AFFAIRS WILL HAVE NOTED a changed naval lexicon over the past several years. To those accustomed to phrases such as "sea power," "command of the seas," "commerce warfare," and "amphibious warfare," the new terms "strategic deterrence," "sea control," and "presence" may seem to be just a new jargon. Not so. Since 1970 there has been a redefinition of traditional U.S. naval roles and missions. The primary purpose of this redefinition is to force the Navy to think in terms of output rather than input.

Why must we emphasize output? First, a nation of concerned free citizens and skeptical taxpayers is naturally more interested in what is harvested than in what is sown. By measuring the value of output in terms of national objectives, the country can rationally decide what resources it should allocate to the Navy. Input categories such as manpower, ships, aircraft, and training are of little help in trying to determine why we need a Navy or, if we do need one, how big it should be and what it should be prepared to do.

Second, focusing on missions helps tactical commanders to keep objectives in mind. Antisubmarine warfare (ASW) tacticians often over-concentrate on killing submarines when their ultimate objective is to ensure safe maritime operations. An example of a good sense of objectives was the Israeli achievement of air superiority in the 1967 war. Even though air superiority is traditionally thought of as a function of dogfight tactics, the Israelis recognized that shooting the enemy from the air was not the objective. Destroying Egyptian aircraft was. They employed deep surprise attacks on enemy airfields to achieve this objective.

Third, an amorphous mass of men, ships, and weapons is difficult to manage because it is difficult for an individual to visualize. By subdividing these masses

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Vice Admiral Turner contributed this article during his term as President of the Naval War College, from 1 July 1972 until 9 August 1974. For reasons of space all graphics except one table have been omitted, necessitating slight alterations of text.

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into their expected output, or missions, we are able to establish priorities for allocating resources—to know how much we are spending for different objectives and to judge their consonance with national strategy.

Mission categorization is useful in less abstract decisionmaking also. For instance, we shall propose that the sea control mission is executed by tactics of sortie control (barrier operations), chokepoint control, open-area operations, and local defense. Different platforms have different utility in each of these tactics. Generally speaking, maritime patrol aircraft are best for open-area operations, surface escorts best for local defense, and submarines best for chokepoint operations. Although each of these forces has secondary applications, resource distribution among them will be dictated by our evaluation of which tactics are going to be most important to us.

Categorization of mission tactics can also be used at even more detailed levels of resource allocation. A submarine designed for chokepoint operations should emphasize quietness at the expense of speed; a submarine for local or escort defense needs speed even at the expense of quietness. If we understand this, we will trade off speed versus quietness according to our evaluation of probable employment.

Fourth, an understanding of missions assists in selecting the best among several competing systems. A research program may develop five new air-launched munitions, but we may not be able to afford production of more than three. We shall divide tactical air projection tactics into deep interdiction, battlefield support, close air support, and counter air/antiair warfare. Each of these makes slightly different demands for weapons. While precision is mandatory for deep interdiction, it is critical in close air support. Surely in our mix of three new weapons we will want at least one that stresses accuracy. If this seems obvious, an examination of history will show that the military has sometimes become hypnotized by the weapons needed or used in one particular tactic or mission to the neglect of newly emerging requirements.

Finally, stressing missions helps to ensure that members of the organization focus on the whole rather than on one of its parts. This can help keep vested interests in proper perspective. Even the most professional, well-motivated individual can become so committed to a particular missile system, type of ship or aircraft, or special personnel program that he loses sight of what is best for the whole organization.

### **Evolution of Naval Capabilities and Missions**

How did the Navy come to define the four mission areas as strategic deterrence, sea control, projection of power ashore, and naval presence? It was

evolutionary. Navies have not always had each of these missions, nor is this likely to be the definitive list of naval missions.

The first and only mission of the earliest navies was sea control. A classic example of the importance of being able to move military forces by sea is the battle of Salamis in 480 B.C. The Persian armies had pushed the Greeks to the wall. The Athenian admiral Themistocles turned the tables by soundly defeating the Persian fleet at Salamis. Cut off from reinforcement and resupply, the Persians left Athens and Attica.

A few decades later, in the Peloponnesian Wars, Athenian sea control repeatedly permitted outflanking the land-based Spartan campaign. In the Punic Wars, Rome's exercise of sea control prevented the Carthaginians from being able to support Hannibal. And so it went. There were many technological milestones, new tactical concepts, and maritime initiatives, but the basic mission of navies was to ensure the safe movement of ground forces and their supplies across the sea.

In time, trade routes flourished, exploration became more far-ranging, the horizons of imperialism widened, commerce grew, and with it, piracy. Nations began to demand security for their endeavors. Broad command of the sea became the *sine qua non* of economic growth and well being. The nature of sea control evolved to include the protection of shipping for the nation's economy as well as its overseas military expeditions. By the same token, denial of an enemy's use of the seas for commerce as well as military purposes became an important element of warfare—blockade hurt economies and warmaking potential.

By the early 19th century, another important naval mission had evolved—the projection of ground forces from the sea onto the land. While there are many examples of landing operations throughout military history, amphibious warfare in the modern sense began during the wars of the French Revolution. Examples are the British amphibious assault operations at the Helder (1799) and Aboukir (1801). Ground troops, traditionally transported by sea to some staging area, began to use sea platforms as combat springboards. A new dimension in tactics was given to commanders in the projection of power ashore through amphibious assault. This also extended the traditional sea control mission. In addition to protecting supply reinforcement and economic shipping, navies now had to protect the amphibious assault force.

Also during the 19th century, the term “gunboat diplomacy” came into the naval vocabulary. In the quest for colonies, nations paraded their naval forces to intimidate sheiks and pashas and to serve warning on one another. In time the range of this activity extended from warning and coercion to demonstrations of good will. It has come to be known as the naval presence mission. Sea control,

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projection of power ashore by amphibious means, and naval presence were the missions of navies through the end of World War II.

During that war, naval tactical air was used primarily in the sea control mission (e.g., Midway, Coral Sea, and the Battle of the Atlantic) and secondarily in direct support of the amphibious assault mission. When the war ended, however, there was no potential challenger to U.S. sea control. In essence, the U.S. Navy had too much of a monopoly to justify a continuing sea control mission. It was a navy in quest of new missions. Two arose.

The innovation in missions came from the final stages of World War II, when naval tactical airpower played a role in the bombing of the Japanese home islands. Postwar improvements in aircraft and munitions made it logical to extend this use of naval airpower. In a sense, the tactical air projection mission was born. The Navy staked out its claim to the use of airpower in support of land campaigns: strategic air attack on enemy industry, transportation, and cities; air superiority over the battlefield; and close air support of ground forces. Its value was demonstrated early in the Korean campaign, where there were few alternative means of providing air support ashore.

The second innovation in naval missions came with the introduction of strategic deterrence as a national military requirement. The combination of improved aircraft performance and smaller packaging of nuclear weapons made the aircraft carrier capable of contributing to this new mission. With the Navy struggling to readjust its missions to peacetime needs, and the U.S. Air Force establishing its own place in the military family, it is understandable that there was a sense of competition for this new role. However, by the mid-1960s, the development of the Polaris ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) concept eliminated any question of appropriateness of this mission for the Navy.

At about the same time, the dramatic and determined growth of the Soviet naval challenge caused mission priorities to begin to shift and brought about a resurgence of traditional sea control requirements. Today, the balance of naval resources and attention devoted to each of these four missions—strategic deterrence, sea control, projection of power ashore, and naval presence—is especially difficult, because of their complex interdependence and because almost all naval forces have multimission capabilities.

The distinction between the four missions is primarily one of purpose. Despite these inevitable overlaps and interdependence, we can understand the Navy far better if we carefully examine each mission individually. We must know what each mission's objectives are so that we do not overlook some useful new tactic or weapon and so that we can strike the proper balance whenever these missions compete for resources.

## Definition of Naval Missions and Discussion of Their Forces and Tactics

***Strategic Deterrence Mission.*** Our strategic deterrence objectives are:

- To deter all-out attack on the United States or its allies;
- To face any potential aggressor contemplating less than all-out attack with unacceptable risks; and
- To maintain a stable political environment within which the threat of aggression or coercion against the United States or its allies is minimized.

In support of these national objectives, we have three principal military "tactics" or force-preparedness objectives. The first is to maintain an assured second-strike capability, in the hope of deterring an all-out strategic nuclear attack on the United States. Today that means dissuading the Soviets from starting a nuclear war. We hope to achieve this by maintaining a strategic attack force capable of inflicting unacceptable damage on any enemy even after he has attacked us. The Navy's Polaris/Poseidon/Trident forces are fundamental to this deterrence because of their high nuclear survival probability.

A second tactic is to design our forces to ensure that the United States is not placed in an unacceptable position by a partial nuclear attack. If the Soviets attacked only a portion of our strategic forces, would it then make sense for the United States to retaliate by striking Soviet cities, knowing that the Soviets still possessed adequate forces to strike our own cities? In these circumstances do we need an alternative of controlled response? This means making our strategic strike forces quickly responsive to changes in targeting and capable of accurate delivery. SSBN forces can be well tailored to these requirements.

A third objective is to deter third powers from attacking the United States with nuclear weapons. Because of the great disparity between any third country's nuclear arsenal and ours, the same forces deterring the Soviet Union should deter others.

Finally, we maintain a quantity and quality of strategic forces which will not let us appear to be at a disadvantage [with respect] to the Soviet Union or any other power. If we were to allow the opinion to develop that the Soviet strategic position is markedly superior to ours, we would find that political decisions were being adversely influenced. Thus we must always keep in mind the balance-of-power image that our forces portray to the non-Soviet world. In part, this image affects what and how much we buy for strategic deterrence. In part, it affects how we talk about our comparative strength and how we criticize ourselves.

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In summary, the strategic deterrence mission is subdivided into four tactics:

- Assured second strike
- Controlled response
- Deter third powers
- Balance-of-power image.

There is very little overlap between strategic deterrence and other Navy mission areas at present. However, significant improvements in enemy ASW technology could reduce the ability of SSBNs to survive without assistance from friendly sea control forces. With this exception and the fact that aircraft carriers still possess the potential for nuclear strikes, naval forces for strategic nuclear deterrence are almost exclusively devoted to that mission.

**Sea Control Mission.** The term “sea control” derives from the traditional phrase “control of the sea.” This change in terminology may seem minor, but it is a deliberate attempt to acknowledge the limitations on ocean control brought about by the development of the submarine and the airplane.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, we passed through a period of maritime history in which full regulation of the seas in wartime was the ambition of Great Britain. Initially, this could be accomplished through possession of a superior sailing fleet. The enemy’s harbors were closely watched by patrolling cutters and frigates. Ships of the line were called forth to defeat the enemy or at least to force him back into port whenever he dared to sortie. Later, when steam propulsion afforded ships greater mobility, the British found that they needed both coaling stations and control of vital chokepoints around the world. The intention was still to be able to move a superior fleet into position for a showdown engagement before an enemy had the opportunity to use the seas for his advantage. The term “control of the sea,” as used by Mahan, meant both denying use of the seas to the enemy and asserting one’s own use.

British and German naval strategies in World War I reflected this heritage. Both navies believed that a decisive encounter of their battle fleets would determine control of the seas. Hence caution dominated the tactics of Jutland. Germany challenged British reliance on a superior battle fleet first by employing surface-ship commerce raiders, then by unrestricted submarine warfare. The British reacted by attempting to blockade the German U-boats with mines laid across the exit to the North Sea. It failed. Few naval strategists understood how radically the concept of “control of the seas” was altered by the advent of the submarine. British, German, Japanese, and American preparations for World War II all concentrated on potential battle fleet actions. Only a few voices pointed

out that an additional submarine might be more useful than another battleship or two.

Equally few strategists forecast the dominant role that control of the air over a surface fleet would have. However, in March 1941, off Cape Matapan in Greece, the first engagement of major surface forces since Jutland demonstrated that it was the presence of a British aircraft carrier that allowed an otherwise weaker force to prevail. By the end of World War II the idea of totally denying the seas to one's enemy while asserting one's own exclusive use had been overtaken by technology. On the one hand it was nearly impossible to deny an enemy submarine fleet access to the seas; on the other, there were likely to be areas of the sea where enemy airpower would make the assertion of one's presence prohibitively costly. Yet, for the first several decades after the Second World War, the U.S. Navy had such a monopoly on seapower that the term "control of the sea" understandably continued to carry its long-established connotation.

The new term "sea control" is intended to connote more realistic control in limited areas and for limited periods of time. It is conceivable today to exert air, submarine, and surface control temporarily in an area while moving ships into position to project power ashore or to resupply overseas forces. It is no longer conceivable, except in the most limited sense, totally to control the seas for one's own use or to deny them totally to an enemy.

This may change with evolving technology and tactics, but in the meantime we must approach the use of the term "sea control" from two directions: denying an enemy the right to use some seas at some times, and asserting our own right to use some seas at some times. Any seapower may assert its own right to use the seas and deny that right to the enemy at any given time. Its efforts will usually be divided between the two objectives. For instance, if the United States were attempting in wartime to use the North Atlantic to reinforce Europe, the greater percentage of its effort would be on asserting sea control. In a situation like the Vietnam War, we operated on the other extreme, since our use of the seas was not challenged, but we did make a substantial effort to deny the other side access to Haiphong. An opponent, of course, will usually respond with countering objectives and tactics.

Four U.S. national objectives which call for asserting our use of the sea and, by the same token, denial of them to an opponent are:

- To ensure industrial supplies
- To reinforce/resupply military forces engaged overseas
- To provide wartime economic/military supplies to allies
- To provide safety for naval forces in the projection of power ashore role.



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There are four different tactical approaches for achieving these sea control objectives:

*Sortie Control.* Bottling up an opponent in his ports or in his bases can still be attempted. As opposed to the 18th and 19th-century tactic of forcing a major fleet engagement at sea, today's blockade seeks destruction of individual units as they sortie. If we assume an opponent will be in control of the air near his ports, sortie control tactics must primarily depend on submarines and mines.

If successful, sortie control is a most economical means of cutting off a nation's use of the seas or ability to interfere. Nevertheless, such established techniques have their disadvantages. No blockade is 100 percent successful. Some units may be beyond the blockade when hostilities commence and will remain to haunt opposition forces. Against the enemy's aircraft there is no static defense; planes must be bombed at their bases. Thus we must conclude that blockades are weapons of attrition, requiring time to be effective. But the lesson of history is perhaps the most instructive of all—ingenious man has usually found ways to circumvent blockades.

*Chokepoint Control.* Sometimes the best place to engage the enemy is in a geographical bottleneck through which he must pass. In so doing, platforms like ASW aircraft that probably could not survive in the area of the enemy's sortie point can be used. This also requires patience. For those enemy forces that have cleared sortie and chokepoint operations, there are two remaining tactics for dealing with them.

*Open Area Operations.* Once the enemy is loose at sea or in the air, surveillance and search systems can assist in locating and putting him at bay. Aircraft are perhaps the most appropriate platform, because of high search rates. Here again, though, time and patience are required.

*Local Defense (Engagement).* In contrast to searching out a large area, we can let the enemy come to us. If we are asserting our use of the seas, this means that his attacking craft, ships, or submarines must close our forces to within weapon-release range. This enables us to concentrate our defensive forces around the units to be protected. Defensive forces may consist of surface escorts, submarines, and whatever aircraft can be brought to the scene—maritime or ASW patrol, fighter or attack. These forces may attempt to destroy the enemy's launching platform prior to weapon release or may attempt to deflect or destroy the attacking weapons themselves. If we are denying use of the seas to someone else, local engagement amounts to positioning forces in a limited region and then preying upon the enemy.

The weapons employed in these four tactics are numerous, their selection depending on timing and the situation. The same weapon may be used to assert our control or to deny control to an opponent. This multimission character of

many weapons systems often causes misunderstanding of the boundary between sea control and the other naval missions.

In executing sea control tactics, two passive techniques deserve particular mention:

*Deception.* Assertive sea control objectives do not necessarily demand destruction of the enemy's force. If the enemy can be sufficiently deceived to frustrate his ability to press an attack, we will have achieved our sea control objective. Force routing, deceptive/imitative devices, and other antisearch techniques can be employed, often in combination with other tactics.

*Intimidation.* The perceptions of other nations of our sea control capability relative to that of other major powers can influence political and military decisions. What any nation says about its capabilities influences the challenges that are offered or accepted.

In summary, sea control tactics include:

- Sortie control
- Chokepoint control
- Open-area operations
- Local defense (engagement)
- Deception
- Intimidation.

***Projection of Power Ashore Missions.*** Sea control is concerned with what happens on, under, and over the ocean surface. Projection of power ashore is concerned with the impact of naval forces on land forces, and it can be divided into three categories: amphibious assault, naval bombardment, and tactical air.

*Amphibious Assault Projection.* Ships have long been used to transport military power to conflict areas. As noted earlier, assault from the sea in the face of opposition began to develop as a naval mission in the early 19th century. The calamitous assault at Gallipoli in 1915 and subsequent failure to distinguish poor execution from good strategy lowered enthusiasm for this mission. However, World War II and the Korean conflict testified to its continuing importance.

Amphibious assaults are opposed landings on hostile territory and have four objectives:

- To secure territory from which a land campaign can be launched and supported. We do this by assault from the sea in several circumstances. One is when there is no other practical approach, that is, the enemy territory is a geographical or political island. Another is when we want to outflank and

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surprise the enemy. The Okinawa and the Normandy landings in World War II are examples. The purpose of the assault on Okinawa was to secure a base from which to launch the invasion of Japan. In Normandy the assault launched the attack into the heartland of Germany.

- To secure a land area from which an air operation can be launched and supported. One of the costliest amphibious assaults during World War II was launched against Iwo Jima to gain a site from which the Air Force could strike Japan.

- To secure selected territory or facilities to prevent enemy use of them. The first offensive action of World War II in the Pacific was the capture of Guadalcanal to deny the Japanese the airfield facilities from which they could interdict U.S. supply routes between Pearl Harbor and Australia.

- To destroy enemy facilities, interrupt his communications, divert his effort, et cetera, by means of amphibious raids with planned withdrawal.

Amphibious tactics are classified by the size of the operation, as indicated in the figure.

### COMPARISON OF AMPHIBIOUS TASK ORGANIZATIONS

|                 | MAF*        | MAB*         | MAU*        | Raid      |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| Troops          | To 33,000   | 8,000-12,000 | 1,800-4,000 | 50-250    |
| Ships           | 43-52       | 15-17        | 4-6         | 1-2       |
| Helos           | 250-300     | 75-120       | 30-36       | 10-14     |
| Attack Aircraft | 50-60       | 18-20        | 6-8**       | 2-4**     |
| Boats           | 320-350     | 80-100       | 30-40       | 2-10      |
| Gunfire Support | 8-10 8"     |              |             |           |
|                 | 22-30 5"/54 | 12-14 5"/54  | 2-4 5"/54   | 0-3 5"/54 |

\*MAF — Marine Amphibious Force

MAB — Marine Amphibious Brigade

MAU — Marine Amphibious Unit

\*\*VTOL — Vertical Takeoff and Landing

These rough force compositions are by no means rigid. There are many specific ways in which amphibious assault forces can be tailored to the particular requirements at hand. Obviously the landing force must be adequate in size to handle the tasks assigned ashore. As the size of an assault increases, there are two factors that scale upward more than proportionally to the number of troops to be landed. One is the number of specialized units that are required, such as command, control, and communications ships or facilities; minesweeping capability; aircraft and gunfire support. The other factor is the time to assemble, sail, prepare the landing area and assault. The larger the operation the more

complex it becomes, with attendant delays and the risk of enemy advance defensive preparations.

Finally, when little or no opposition is encountered, such as in Lebanon in 1958, amphibious forces can be landed "administratively." They can then be employed as regular ground forces, if supported. Administrative landings are considered amphibious operations only when the unique over-the-beach capability of amphibious force is an essential element.

*Naval Bombardment.* Although most commonly associated with amphibious assault, bombardment can have three separate objectives:

- To provide direct support to troops operating near a coastline
- To interdict movements along a coastline
- To harass military or civil operations in coastal areas.

Bombardment is presently available from naval guns in destroyers and cruisers. There are two tactics: either direct or indirect fire control can be employed, depending on the distance of the ship and target from shore. Targets can be prearranged geographically, found by observers on the beach, or selected visually from a ship or aircraft. The accuracy of fire can be spotted from on board ship, from ashore, or from an aircraft. In time, even conventionally armed missiles may also be employed in this role.

*Tactical Air Projection.* Tactical airpower is used to achieve three objectives:

- Destroy portions of the enemy's warmaking potential
- Provide support to a ground campaign directly or by interdicting enemy support to the engaged areas
- Deny an enemy these same options against us.

There are four basic tactics by which these objectives are achieved: deep interdiction, battlefield interdiction, close air support, and counterair/antiair warfare.

Deep interdiction: attacks conducted to destroy, neutralize, or impair the enemy's military potential before it can be directed against friendly forces are deep interdiction. Targets assigned may be military or civilian, remote from the battle area, and perhaps more strategic than tactical. To prevent the enemy from moving forces and material under the protective cover of darkness or adverse weather, an all-weather attack capability is important.

Battlefield interdiction: sometimes referred to as direct air support (DAS), battlefield interdiction differs from deep interdiction in two ways: targets are usually military and of immediate tactical importance, and airspace control must

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be closely coordinated with frontline support operations. Sustained battlefield interdiction can restrict the enemy's capability to move supplies/reinforcements or maneuver his forces.

Close air support: providing direct support to frontline ground forces, close air support is generally exercised in a similar manner as call-fire support from field artillery. Therefore, very close coordination with gunfire support elements is necessary.

Counterair/antiair warfare: in order to conduct the three types of air strike operations, counterair forces are employed to neutralize the enemy's air capabilities to minimize expected attrition of our forces. The threat over enemy territory may be surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), antiaircraft guns (AAA) or fighter interceptor aircraft. Counters to these range from attack on enemy airbases or weapons sites to direct protection with our fighters or electronic countermeasures. When the situation is reversed and an opponent is projecting his airpower over our territory, antiair warfare operations come into play. Fighters, SAMs, and AAA are employed to exact attrition on enemy aircraft.

All of these tactical air projection tactics are carried out by attack aircraft supported as feasible and necessary by fighter-interceptor air-superiority forces. One of the values of categorizing air projection missions is to identify the aircraft and weapon characteristics and tactics best suited to each mission. [For instance, high-speed aircraft and long-range weapons are well suited to interdiction but not to close air support.] There will be specific scenarios where any judgmental tabulation will be incorrect. It would be desirable to be infinitely flexible and have maximum characteristics in all aircraft and weapons; unfortunately, the laws of both physics and economics prevent that. Hence, some evaluation of probable use and likely need can be valuable.

Before leaving the projection mission, we would note that only a fine distinction separates some aspects of the sea control and projection of power ashore missions. Many weapons and platforms are used in both missions. Amphibious assaults on chokepoints or tactical airstrikes on enemy air bases can be employed as a part of the sea control mission. Sea-based tactical aircraft are used in sea control missions for antiair warfare and against enemy surface combatants. The distinction in these cases is not in the type of forces nor the tactics which are employed, but in the purpose of the operation. Is the objective to secure or deny use of the seas, or is it to support the land campaign directly? For instance, much of the layman's confusion over aircraft carriers use stems from the impression that they are employed exclusively in the projection of power ashore role. Actually, from the Battle of Cape Matapan through World War II, aircraft carriers were used almost exclusively to establish control of the

ocean's surface. Today they clearly have a vital role to play in both the sea control and projection of power missions.

In summary, projection of power ashore tactics are:

- Amphibious assault
  - Marine amphibious force
  - Marine amphibious brigade
  - Marine amphibious unit
  - Raid.
- Naval bombardment
  - Direct
  - Indirect.
- Tactical air
  - Deep interdiction
  - Battlefield interdiction
  - Close air support
  - Counterair/antiair.

**Naval Presence Mission.** Simply stated, the naval presence mission is the use of naval forces, short of war, to achieve political objectives. The use of presence forces is for two broad objectives:

- To deter actions inimical to the interests of the United States or its allies
- To encourage actions that are in the interests of the United States or its allies.

We attempt to accomplish these objectives with two tactics: preventive deployments and reactive deployments. The key difference is whether we initiate a show of presence in peacetime (preventive) or whether we are responding to a crisis (reactive). In a preventive deployment our force capabilities should be relevant to the kind of problems which might arise; clearly they cannot be markedly inferior to some other naval force in the neighborhood, but they can rely to some extent on the prospect that reinforcements can be made available if necessary. On the other hand, in a reactive deployment any force deployed needs to possess an immediately credible threat and be prepared to have its bluff called. If another seapower, such as the Soviet Union, is in the area, a comparison of forces will be inevitable.

In deciding to insert a presence force, we must consider what size and composition of force is appropriate to the situation. There are basically five actions with which a naval presence force can threaten another nation:

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- Amphibious assault
- Air attack
- Bombardment
- Blockade
- Exposure through reconnaissance.

In addition, almost any size and type of presence force can imply that the United States is concerned with the situation and may decide to bring other military forces to bear as well.

All too often, especially in reactive deployments, we tend to send the largest and most powerful force that can move to the scene rapidly. The image created may not be appropriate to the specific problem. For instance, the threat of major air attack on a small oil sheikdom would not be credible, but the threat of an amphibious assault on the capital might be; or, sailing a major fleet to show support for a small government threatened with insurrection might be more unsettling than stabilizing, perhaps prompting over-reaction.

When selecting a naval presence force, we must also take into account how the countries that we want to influence will perceive the situation. There are three distinctly different categories of national perceptions:

*The Soviet Union.* When contemplating a U.S. presence force, the Soviets must assess their comparative naval strength available over time and the expected degree of U.S. resolve. Their principal strength comparison would probably be on which country can exercise sea control in the area in question, since the United States is not likely to pose a threat of projecting power directly against the U.S.S.R., except in a worldwide crisis of the most serious proportions.

*Nations Allied to the Soviets.* Nations with close ties to the Soviets must assess relative United States–U.S.S.R. capabilities in the particular circumstances. These powers will be asking the questions, “Can the United States project its assembled power onto my shores?” and “Can the U.S.S.R. deny them that capability?” Thus third-nation appraisal of relative sea control strengths may be the most critical factor. We should note, however, that third-power assessments may not correspond to the assessments either we or the Soviets would make of identical military factors.

*Unaligned Third Nations.* There will be cases where a nation is not able to invoke major-power support in a dispute with the United States. The perceptions of such a country would likely focus on U.S. capability and will to project its power ashore to influence events in that country itself.

Thus, the naval presence mission is simultaneously as sophisticated and sensitive as any, but also probably the least understood of all Navy missions. A well orchestrated naval presence can be enormously useful in complementing

diplomatic actions to achieve political objectives. Applied deftly but firmly, in precisely the proper force, naval presence can be a persuasive deterrent to war. If used ineptly, it can be disastrous. Thus, in determining presence objectives, scaling forces, and appraising perceptions, there will never be a weapons system as important as the human intellect.

In summary, the tactics of the naval presence mission are:

- Preventive deployments
- Reactive deployments.

### **Current and Future Issues Involving Naval Missions Areas**

The United States, as we have seen, has performed the four basic naval missions for many years. Yet the dynamic nature of world conditions demands a continuing reassessment of the relation of one mission to another and the comparative emphasis on their individual tactics. National priorities change; the nature of the threat changes. Only by understanding the complex interdependence between naval missions and their elements can we expect to be able to allocate resources wisely and prepare for the future rather than the past.

Some of the key issues which must be addressed are:

#### ***Intra-mission Issues.***

##### *Strategic Deterrence.*

Can we maintain our balance of power image and accent controlled response without appearing to be developing a first-strike capability?

##### *Sea Control.*

- Will probable scenarios allow time for attrition tactics?
- Can local engagement forces be made more effective?
- Should future SSNs be designed for employment in barriers (attrition), or as escorts (local engagement)?

##### *Projection of Power Ashore.*

###### Amphibious Assault—

- What size assault force is most likely to be needed?
- Should we design lift forces and tactics differently for different-size assaults?

###### Naval Bombardment—

- Should the vanishing 6-inch and 8-inch guns be replaced?



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- Is there a place for bombardment by non-nuclear missiles?

Tactical Air—

- How much high-performance capability is needed—or can we afford—for deep interdiction?
- What tactical application could vertical-and-short-takeoff-and-landing aircraft best fulfill?
- In what ways are electronic warfare requirements influenced by the different tactics?

*Naval Presence.*

Are there different operating policies that would yield a greater presence capability?

### ***Inter-mission Issues.***

*Strategic Deterrence vs. General-Purpose Forces.*

- How much of the Navy's resources belongs in strategic deterrence?
- Should sea-based missiles be favored over the other elements of the SSBN/ICBM/bomber triad and assume a greater role in strategic deterrence?

*Sea Control vs. Projection of Power.*

- Does the increased size of the Soviet Navy signal the end of our freedom to project power from sea sanctuaries and justify shifting more resources into sea control?
- Did our Vietnam experience diminish the probability of future force-projection wars?
- Are “low-mix”\* sea control forces incompatible with the projection of power?

*Presence vs. Combative Missions.*

Is the presence mission becoming sufficiently important to warrant building or designing forces for that purpose?

Obviously we cannot resolve these issues of inter-mission priority in a vacuum. We must consider both what our national political objectives are and what any potential opponent is doing. Our principal military concern, of course,

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\*When we think in the accustomed terms of projection of power from sea sanctuaries, we incline toward larger, more cost-effective, and more efficient platforms (the “high” of the “high-low mix”). Sea control favors numbers of units, because operations will likely spread to numerous areas—the “low” side of the mix.

is the growing Soviet Navy. The evolution of their post-World War II navy would indicate that they started with a sea denial orientation, as evidenced by their emphasis on submarines. There are those who argue that this was intended only to deny us access to waters from which we could project power into the Soviet Union. There are others who contend that their sea denial capability now includes being able to interdict our resupply operations over a wide span of oceans. It also seems clear that the Soviet Navy has chosen to exercise its naval presence capabilities aggressively. Whether it looks on this as a fallout of its other capabilities or has done so deliberately is difficult to assess. With the advent of Soviet aircraft carriers and the continuing expansion of their amphibious forces, there is a growing question of whether the Soviets have ambitions for projection of power ashore capability. If so, it would logically be accompanied by assertive sea control capabilities to defend their projection forces. Even smaller non-allied navies, such as the Chinese, must be taken into account. They, like the Soviets, are starting with a sea denial orientation. With relatively simple sea denial weapons, such as antiship missiles and mines, proliferating and extending in reach, the threat of sea denial in restricted waters from even the smallest navies may well increase in the future.

There will always be this constant flow and counterflow of mission emphasis and tactical adaptation. Perhaps it is even more accentuated today than in the past. On the one hand, the pace of technological innovation is forcing this. On the other, the changing nature of world political relationships demands a continual updating of naval capabilities to support national policy. Naval officers, as professionals, must understand the Navy's missions, continually question their rationale, and provide the intellectual basis for keeping them relevant and responsive to the nation's needs. Unless we do, we will be left behind, attempting to use yesterday's tools to achieve today's objectives.

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