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# "Just Say No!" The U.S. Navy and Arms Control: A Misguided Policy?

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Adam B. Siegel

**T**he U.S. Navy has traditionally been circumspect with regard to the application of arms control to the maritime environment, a stance that has frustrated arms control proponents. The navy consensus seems to be that the best answer to arms control is to "Just Say No."

This attitude toward naval arms control can be seen in a speech delivered by Admiral Carl Trost, the chief of naval operations, to the Baltimore Council on Foreign Affairs. In his talk, entitled "The Soviet Naval Arms Control Offensive," Trost emphasized that "maritime nations have seldom benefited from naval disarmament treaties. . . . The Washington Naval Conference of the 1920s proved to be one of those misguided policies, so seductive in the present, so harmful to the future, that we have adopted too often in our history; and that have led us step by descending step into the abyss of war."<sup>1</sup>

Some arms control advocates might argue that the navy holds this attitude because it is composed of trigger-happy cold warriors nostalgic for the days when a captain could act without the chairman of the joint chiefs, the president, and congress looking over his shoulder. This view, however, is wrong, and is based on a misinterpretation of navy discomfort with the concept of arms control. Such arms control proponents tend to forget that one of the most successful military agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union is solely a navy concern: the almost two-decade old Incidents at Sea agreement. Furthermore, there have been three substantive reasons for U.S. Navy opposition to arms control agreements: first, opposition

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Mr. Siegel is a nonresident student of the Naval War College. This paper, which was written as part of the author's War College studies, was awarded first honorable mention in the College's 1989 Richard G. Colbert prize essay competition. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. government.

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to the establishment of precedents that challenge the underlying principles of maritime law; second, the questionable benefits of the proposals to the national security of the United States; and third, the difficulty of verifying an agreement within the limitations of current technology.<sup>2</sup>

It is essential in our consideration of naval arms control measures that we be wary of agreements that would go against current maritime law, that would hinder the attainment of national security, and that would be difficult (or impossible) to verify. One frequently heard proposal, the establishment of ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) sanctuaries as a means to promote "stability" and reduce the risk of nuclear conflict, can be called into question on all three accounts. Creation of SSBN sanctuaries would modify current international maritime law by forbidding the operation of ships (and aircraft) with antisubmarine warfare capabilities in certain areas of the high seas, thus setting a precedent against the freedom of the seas. Moreover, an agreement on SSBN sanctuaries would be greatly detrimental to the U.S. national security posture. Currently, U.S. SSBNs, which operate in the vast expanses of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, have little to fear from Soviet submarines; on the other hand, Soviet SSBNs operate in enclosed seas near the Soviet Union where U.S. attack submarines present a constant potential threat to them. Thus, limiting deployment areas of SSBNs would not enhance the security of U.S. SSBNs but would release a large number of Soviet SSNs from their current responsibilities (protecting Soviet SSBNs in bastions) and thus make them available to attack U.S./Nato sea lines of communication (SLOCs) in the event of war. Finally, such an agreement would be virtually impossible to verify within current technological limits. Detecting and tracking submarines is one of the most difficult of naval tasks. Verification of an SSBN sanctuary agreement would require high levels of tracking and would also require that U.S. Navy antisubmarine warfare (ASW) capabilities be revealed to the world to demonstrate lack of compliance by Soviet submarines. The concept of SSBN sanctuaries, therefore, is seriously flawed in all three areas, and pursuit of such an agreement would not be of benefit to the United States.

On the other hand, the current arms control phobia that seems evident on the part of much of the U.S. Navy deserves a rethinking—naval arms control might not be an evil genie. There are reasons why a thorough examination of naval arms control issues would be particularly valuable today. The current budgetary environment points to long-term constraints on and scrutiny of military outlays.<sup>3</sup> The cuts included in the Defense Department's FY 1990 budget are only the harbinger of things to come; without major changes in the fiscal environment, the 600 ship navy is now unattainable. In these circumstances, the navy's leadership should be seeking to maximize the security of the United States through the minimum cost (or, at least, within a limited cost). Shaving dollars and cents here and there can't achieve the

necessary cuts, and programs that have thus far faced "the ax" have been those best suited for responding to international incidents and crises in the Third World—carriers, escort ships, and conventional aviation programs such as the F-14 upgrade, A6F, and the MV-22. If the lowering of superpower tensions continues, programs such as the Mobile MX, Midgetman missile, D5 missile, B-1 upgrades, and B-2 bomber seem much more logical programs to cut. However, it is interesting to note that in the FY 90 budget no such program was cut, while major conventional force programs faced the ax. This seems the wrong emphasis in a world where the outbreak of a global superpower war seems to be a decreasing possibility. Arms control offers a means to reduce the dilemmas in these cost-cutting decisions. The navy can, through an arms control agreement, channel cuts in a way that would improve security while achieving fiscal savings.

The United States and the Soviet Union are currently undergoing a form of mutual unilateral arms control reductions. Fiscal restraints in both nations are driving force levels down. The Soviet Union has promised to cut 500,000 troops from its armed forces, and U.S. Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney has proposed a budget which would cut forces from all branches of the military. Why then, one may ask, should arms control be pursued if the finance ministries of the world are already cutting force levels? The most important answer lies in the risk that, in the West, enthusiasm for this mutual spending curb might extend beyond the true period of mutuality, and we could find ourselves paring forces to the bone while the Soviet Union has begun to rebuild. Furthermore, creating a structured format of force level reductions, rather than a budget by budget indiscriminate slashing, would enable U.S. defense planners to structure future budgets in a cost-saving manner that would allow the most effective use to be made of each dollar.<sup>4</sup>

There is a simple set of principles that should guide U.S. arms control negotiators:<sup>5</sup>

- Arms control agreements should not be sought for the sake of an agreement.
- They should improve (or at least not degrade) stability between the superpowers and be achievable without a "window of vulnerability" (thus reducing the chance of an outbreak of war).
- They should improve the security of the United States.<sup>6</sup>
- They should be verifiable (and the easier to verify, the better).
- They should include provisions for responses to violations so that an administration can be held accountable for what it negotiates and congress can be held responsible for backing up an agreement it voted for.<sup>7</sup>
- They should save money (a growing priority in a time of increasing defense austerity).

The navy's traditional approach to arms control might not be the most realistic one in an era of tightening fiscal restraints and decreasing superpower

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tensions. Consideration should be given to the applicability of arms control in the maritime environment. While unlikely to be a panacea for all the navy's ills and fears, might not arms control help the navy adjust to the new international political and domestic environment of the coming decade? The following are examples of potentially viable arenas for naval arms control:

- NCND or "Why can't we enter your port?" The navy's "neither confirm nor deny" (NCND) policy creates tensions with allies from Japan to Norway. With an agreement banning deployment of nuclear weapons on surface ships, NCND would no longer be an issue.

- The Outer-Air Battle. One of the most pressing difficulties in navy planning is how to protect surface ships from long-range attacks. Defining any air-launched weaponry (whether armed with a conventional or nuclear warhead) with a range greater than 450 miles (for example) as a "strategic" weapon, and therefore countable in a "strategic" arms agreement, would alleviate the outer-air battle problem.

- Antisubmarine Warfare (ASW). The large number of Soviet attack submarines combined with their rapidly improving capabilities present the U.S. and allied navies with an increasing threat. A "build-down" to a total of seventy attack submarines in both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. inventories would lessen the threat to both sides.

These are just a limited sample of the possible paths for naval arms control. They offer, however, two very important benefits absent from many arms control proposals currently being touted by some arms control proponents: they will solve, or at least ameliorate, serious U.S. Navy concerns; and, they should save money!<sup>8</sup>

Despite these important benefits, however, the navy seems likely to be opposed to detailed U.S. government examination of such proposals based on a wariness of the oft-cited slippery slope: the fear that even the consideration of a proposal would lead not only to its adoption but toward the wholesale signing of arms control agreements with no strategic rhyme or reason behind them. It is not clear that this is an accurate assessment of the arms control process. Naval arms control proposals that can meet the criteria outlined above deserve more serious consideration for a number of reasons. First, current scuttlebutt in Washington raises the possibility that budget cutbacks will put a 600 ship navy into the distant, unforeseeable future, and possibly reduce the navy to 13 (or even fewer) carrier-battle groups. Herein lies grist for the arms control mill. If the U.S. Navy is to cut force structure, shouldn't it seek to get something for it?

Second, in an era of budget cutbacks and a lessening Soviet threat, the U.S. Navy should focus a greater percentage of a declining budget on what has been the bread and butter of U.S. naval operations since World War II—responding to crises and international incidents worldwide. Rather than focusing cuts on carriers—which are used in the majority of U.S. crisis

responses—aren't submarines and nuclear weaponry more sensible areas from which to gain financial savings?

Third, there has been a recent wave of academic and other non-navy attention directed to the issue of naval arms control—attention absent perhaps since the abandoned attempt to arrange an Indian Ocean zone of peace agreement with the Soviet Union a decade ago. Not only have the Soviets frequently discussed naval arms control,<sup>9</sup> but from such diverse American sources as the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*,<sup>10</sup> the Institute for Policy Studies,<sup>11</sup> the U.S. Naval Institute<sup>12</sup> and the *Naval War College Review*<sup>13</sup> there has been a stream of literature on the issue of naval arms control in the past few years. To date, the uniformed navy has not played a leading role in this debate (except in the articulation of weaknesses in some of the proposed maritime arms control regimes). Thus, the discussions have frequently focused on proposals that would neither improve the nation's security nor produce fiscal savings (such as ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) sanctuary zones). Could not U.S. Navy participation in this debate channel this intellectual ferment into more productive paths? Does not the absence of a guiding hand from the U.S. Navy raise the possibility that an irresistible momentum might develop behind a proposal that is truly abhorrent to navy leadership and detrimental to U.S. long-term interests?

Finally, since Gorbachev's ascendancy to power the Soviet Union has abandoned its failed hard-line approach to arms control (as exemplified by the walk-out from all negotiations following the beginning of Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) deployments). The Soviet "naval arms control offensive" of the past several years has paid off in the arena of world public opinion, and much of the world considers the Soviets to be the more progressive and more peace-loving of the two superpowers.<sup>14</sup> If the U.S. Navy fosters the development of a viable naval arms control proposal, U.S. arms negotiators will be able to turn the tables and put Soviet negotiators and propagandists on the defensive for a change. Would not a realistic new arms control proposal from the U.S. side stem the anti-American tide which seems to be increasingly evident in European and much of world politics today? Certain naval arms control proposals seem to offer a realistic and beneficial option for such a U.S. "arms control offensive."

Each of these points supports the argument for a rethinking of the issues of naval arms control. Let us now examine several naval arms control proposals that offer the prospect of viable and beneficial agreements between the two superpowers.

### Nuclear Weapons on Surface Vessels

The U.S. Navy has over 190 surface vessels which are considered to be nuclear-capable.<sup>15</sup> As a means of preventing knowledge as to where nuclear

weapons are deployed and of dissipating public protest during U.S. Navy ship visits, the United States has a policy that the navy shall “neither confirm nor deny” (NCND) the presence of nuclear weapons aboard U.S. naval vessels. A New Zealand challenge to this policy was the direct cause of the disintegration of the ANZUS pact. One can argue that the United States doesn’t need New Zealand and, more importantly, that it was not the NCND policy but New Zealand’s refusal to live up to its treaty commitments that led to the disintegration of ANZUS (i.e., that New Zealand desired to benefit from but not bear any burden of the nuclear deterrent). However, it is not only New Zealanders who dislike NCND and the possible presence of nuclear weapons aboard U.S. Navy surface ships that visit their ports; this policy has caused tensions with many of our allies (or, at least, their publics), including Japan, Greece, Norway, Denmark, Spain, and the Philippines. It is not unusual for U.S. Navy ships to be met by protestors when they call at a port. In addition, it seems clear that this policy has led to a reduction in the number of nations which are willing to accept U.S. port visits. Are these weapons so valuable that strained U.S.-allied relations are a reasonable cost to bear to keep them at sea?

With all the tension that these weapons cause (or, more specifically, that is caused by the NCND policy required by the existence of these weapons), one would expect that there would be an overriding strategic interest in keeping nuclear weapons at sea aboard surface ships. In fact, the opposite is the case: for most of the nuclear weapons that go to sea with the U.S. Navy, it is difficult to make a convincing argument (especially in the absence of a Soviet nuclear threat at sea) for why they should still be on the ships. These weapons are increasingly out-of-date. Congress has continually rejected navy attempts to fund replacements for its tactical nuclear weapons, most of which are over thirty years old; thus, the navy has an aging inventory with little prospects for rejuvenation of its geriatric warheads. In addition, these weapons are very expensive to maintain in the fleet. To keep a surface ship nuclear weapons qualified requires additional maintenance and security personnel and equipment, and large amounts of magazine space are reserved for nuclear weapons, whether they are on board the vessel or not.

Furthermore, these weapons are (and have been) of very questionable military utility. Three examples will bear out this argument. The SUBROC and the nuclear variant of the ASROC (the first submarine, the other surface-launched) are not only likely to destroy the submarine fired at, but the enormous shock wave connected with the use of these nuclear weapons could damage or even destroy the firing platform. Use of the nuclear variant of the Terrier, an anti-aircraft missile, would present a similar dilemma. While it might effectively destroy an incoming Soviet Backfire raid, it might also thoroughly disrupt the fleet’s communications through an electromagnetic pulse (EMP). Utilization of nuclear depth bombs would create a similar

problem under the surface of the sea. While they may (or may not) be extremely effective at killing submarines, their detonation and the resulting underwater disturbances may disrupt sonar operations for hours to come. If a false target were attacked when real Soviet submarines were in the area, the Soviet submarines might be able to escape or to attack with virtual impunity.

Thus, while there might be a tremendous economy of force (i.e., the biggest bang for the buck) in the use of nuclear weapons, their use also comes at a tremendous cost in terms of military operating capability. Indeed, it is this cost which lies behind the navy's recent decision to retire three of these weapons: the SUBROC, and the nuclear variants of the ASROC and the Terrier.

The prospect of a nuclear war at sea is not one many naval officers look on with favor. This is not simply because it is hard to retain romantic notions about a nuclear war, nor because of the limited utility of the weapons deployed on U.S. Navy surface ships. There is also a feeling that the Soviet navy is much better prepared for a nuclear war at sea (for example, through its inclusion of nuclear-biological-chemical (NBC) equipment on all its ships and its regular NBC training exercises) and that the Soviet Union would benefit much more from the use of nuclear weapons at sea than would the United States.<sup>16</sup> Thus, seeking a ban on nuclear weapons on surface vessels might be a path for saving the United States significant amounts of money, improving the navy's preparedness for war, and improving relations with allied nations.

The perceptive reader will note that I have not yet mentioned a major portion of the U.S. Navy's nuclear weaponry on board surface ships which is not tactical in nature, specifically, nuclear-armed Tomahawk land-attack missiles (TLAM-Ns) and carrier aviation-borne weaponry. The second is easier to address than the first.

The rationale for deployment of nuclear weapons aboard carriers has been absent for decades. The typical carrier operating pattern precludes the commitment of these weapons to a strike against predetermined targets within a certain period of time at any moment of time because of the navy's need for operating flexibility. Thus, for decades the nuclear weapons aboard carriers have not been part of the single integrated operating plan (SIOP) (the plan for nuclear warfare against our opponents). These are reserve weapons with little strategic benefit and little benefit to the U.S. deterrent against Soviet use of nuclear weapons.

The surface-deployed TLAM-N is a more difficult question, for the TLAM-N is a giant step forward in many ways. The nuclear-armed Tomahawk is a highly accurate missile which carries a low-yield warhead and which can be launched far from Soviet shores. The rationale for TLAM-N deployment on surface ships, however, remains weak. First, the argument against carrier



aircraft-borne nuclear weapons applies—because of navy operating patterns, these weapons cannot be included in many war plans. Second, the only publicly articulated role of the TLAM-N has been to attack bases supporting nuclear-armed strike bombers that have attacked the U.S. and/or allied fleet. TLAM-Ns deployed aboard submarines can more than adequately fulfill that mission or better yet, deter the tactical use of nuclear weapons at sea. Thus, neither carrier aircraft-borne nuclear weaponry nor TLAM-Ns should stand in the way of a negotiated ban on the deployment of nuclear weapons aboard surface ships.

If such an agreement were pursued, there are a number of questions that still remain.

How would such an agreement be verified? The easiest way would be to give Greenpeace some inflatable rubber boats and Geiger counters, then let them sail around surface ships. This might sound flippant and is an oversimplification, but such an agreement would be among the most easily verifiable of arms control agreements, for it is far easier to determine absence or presence than it is to monitor specific levels of performance. Ease of verification is thus a major advantage of a total ban on the deployment of nuclear weapons on the surface of the seas. Removing tactical weapons would not be enough, for how would one differentiate between weapon systems without intrusive verification?<sup>17</sup>

How would the capability to deploy weapons be affected? It wouldn't. Such an agreement would ban the deployment of weapons, not their existence. Thus, involved parties (an attempt could be made to make this a multilateral agreement, including the Chinese, French and British in addition to the United States and the Soviet Union) would retain the capability to redeploy weapons in response to violations of the treaty by other signatories.

What about nuclear weapons on Soviet naval aviation and coastal defense forces? This question, sadly, I do not have a good answer for. Perhaps one should look in the mirror and imagine the question the Soviets might pose: What about the nuclear antisubmarine weapons carried by land-based U.S. Navy ASW aircraft? As has been noted elsewhere, however, "the elimination of nuclear warheads from Soviet antiship systems would be a desirable quid pro quo for the removal of nuclear warheads from deployed American combatants."<sup>18</sup>

What would be the bottom line of such an agreement? What is the cost-benefit analysis? Well, on the plus side, one must figure in lower operating costs and, most importantly, lowered tension with allies around the globe. On the cost side of the equation, there would be a marginal reduction in strategic flexibility which is inherent in the removal of nuclear weaponry from any sort of platform. One must ask, however, if these weapons continue to make military sense for the U.S. Navy of the 1990s, and the resounding answer would seem to be, Not really. In the absence of true military utility,

and in light of the high political and economic costs of maintaining a nuclear weapons capability on the surface of the seas, it would seem that a ban on the deployment of nuclear weapons aboard surface vessels would be a very fruitful proposal for the navy to explore.

### The Outer-Air Battle

Another difficult technological and operational problem for the navy is the increasing distance at which threats need to be countered. In World War II, enemy aircraft had to come within a very short range of a ship to damage it (since the weapon choices were either dumb gravity bombs or torpedoes); today, however, enemy aircraft can pose a threat to a carrier battle group from hundreds of miles away. The response to this threat has been to counter it at its ever-increasing range and to improve the battle group's defense-in-depth capability (e.g., development and deployment of the AEGIS system). Thus, a solution has been sought through better management of anti-air warfare (AAW) assets and through development of ever more capable AAW weapons.

There seems, however, to be a potential solution to the problem in the arms control arena—and if it is not a solution to the problem, at least it could create an upper bound on the range of the threat and thus limit the magnitude of the problems U.S. naval officers face in defending their ships. At some point, a weapon could be considered to have transcended a boundary between the tactical and strategic level. Coordination between U.S. Navy planners and U.S. arms negotiators in the START talks could lead to a definition of an air-to-surface missile (ASM) with greater than a 400 (or 200 or 600) mile range as a strategic weapon. If this became the case, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union would be likely to concentrate its resources on the development of an air-to-surface weapon with a range over that proscribed in the treaty. While naval officers might view it as a valuable addition to weapon suites, the political leadership would be unlikely to view with favor development of a conventional weapon that would count against strategic weaponry thresholds.

An agreement limiting the range of ASMs would fulfill the criteria set forth above as prerequisites for an arms control agreement. Such an agreement would cut costs by removing (or weakening) the operational requirement for the development of ever longer ranged AAW weapons to match the ever-increasing ranges of ASMs. It would promote stability by lowering (or moderating) the threat aircraft pose to surface ships and vice versa. This agreement would also be verifiable with current "national technical means" used by both the United States and the Soviet Union to monitor the test performance of the other nation's weaponry. This is an example of how an innovative arms control approach could moderate, if not eliminate, a threat

for which a viable, cost-effective technological counter has yet to be found. Many such agreements would likely emerge if naval officers, who are the real experts on these operational challenges and threats, were encouraged to think along these lines.

### **Build-down of Submarines**

The U.S. Navy has a significant concern in the hundreds of conventional and nuclear-propelled attack, cruise-missile, and ballistic-missile submarines in the Soviet fleet. Countering these submarines in the event of war must be a, if not the, major rationale for the size of the U.S. SSN fleet. To date, however, there has been no clear rationale given in public for the number of U.S. attack submarines. While the navy currently has a long-stated goal of a 100 SSN fleet, this number could just as easily be 90 or 110. As Admiral Hayward, then chief of naval operations, stated in Congressional testimony in 1981, "90 was a fiscally constrained, arbitrarily set ceiling, and the 100 is the same, limited to keep a balanced force within a 600-ship Navy framework."<sup>19</sup> Thus the navy seems wedded to a specific number that has no publicly articulated logic connected to it. The United States has submarines assigned to carrier battle groups; it is likely that there are submarines engaged in tracking Soviet submarines; and there are always submarines in port. As of yet, however, no clear, public articulation for the totality has come from beneath the waves. If the massive Soviet subsurface fleet were absent, would a rationale for such a large U.S. SSN fleet remain? This force—unlike most parts of the navy—is clearly required primarily to counter Soviet forces, whether by attacking Soviet SSBNs in the "bastions," sinking Soviet SSNs attempting to destroy U.S. and allied shipping, or decimating Soviet amphibious groups. And, in essence, the same is true of the Soviet submarine fleet. While the Soviets (and the United States, perhaps, as well) may have concerns over Chinese, British, or French submarines, their force is clearly developed in response to the perceived American threat. Thus, if we are truly entering an era of lessening American-Soviet tensions, these forces could hold promise for reductions.

The United States should seek a build-down of attack submarines to a mutual limit far below the current U.S. levels. A good starting figure to consider would be mutual limits of 50 nuclear-propelled and 20 conventionally propelled attack and cruise missile submarines (ballistic missile submarine limitations should and will remain under the "strategic" arms umbrella). One immediate note of protest should be resounding already: "We don't have any conventional submarines and unless we build them, we are doomed to inferiority. He's just another advocate of conventional submarines!" Well, besides the need for the U.S. Navy to reexamine alternative means of submarine propulsion in light of recent technical advances, even if the United

States failed to build conventionally propelled attack submarines, a future 7 to 5 numerical inferiority in attack submarine inventories is far better than the current 2.7 to 1 inferiority. Also, as long as the United States maintains a level of approximately half the current number of attack submarines in the fleet, a Third World submarine threat will remain manageable in the event of a U.S. regional conflict.

Why, then, should we consider this option? With more than twice as many attack submarines as the United States, would the Soviet Union even consider this a serious proposal? My first response is that Mikhail Gorbachev has already surprised us in other ways. Secondly, the Soviets also would gain from such an agreement. A major justification for the Soviet attack submarine fleet rests in the perceived threat posed by U.S. SSNs to Soviet SSBNs. Halving the number of U.S. SSNs would greatly reduce the magnitude of this threat and, therefore, would take away this force level justification. Finally, another major impetus for Soviet willingness to enter into such an agreement would stem from their significant economic problems. Their sizable submarine force uses up a tremendous amount of resources. Just as in the U.S. Navy, some of the best and the brightest of the Soviet Union go beneath the waves. In a period of serious (and growing) demographic difficulties which include a shortage of highly skilled, loyal, and Russian-speaking manpower in the Soviet Union today (a shortage which will continue—and likely worsen—into the distant future), a method for releasing and lowering the requirements for such highly skilled individuals would be looked upon with favor in the U.S.S.R. In addition, the construction of attack submarines from such extremely expensive materials as titanium is an extraordinarily costly proposition. For a Soviet leadership that seems intent on discovering opportunities to free assets needed to boost the civilian economy, such expenditures might stand out as a prime target for a cutback. Thus, a 50/20 mutual force level might be an achievable objective.

Such a level would be achieved through a build-down: for every submarine the United States builds, it would retire two from the fleet; for every submarine the Soviet Union builds, it would retire five. Tied to this would be a graduated schedule of force level ceilings, with the goal of having numerical parity on both sides no later than 15 years in the future.

It is unlikely that such an agreement would seek to limit submarine capabilities in any way (other than in propulsion). As long as that remains the case, it would be relatively easy to verify. Verification would involve only the counting of submarine hulls—something that should be easily achievable with current resources. This agreement is likely to lead to cost savings for a number of reasons. First, U.S. Navy operational costs would go down. Nuclear power specialists are among the most expensive to retain in the navy, and halving the attack submarine fleet would greatly reduce the number of these individuals needed. Second, it is possible that construction

costs would go down. As both nations would be reducing their submarine fleets, there would be less need for replacement submarines for the aging fleet. (This, however, is not necessarily a means of fiscal savings. With no qualitative limit within the numerical ceiling, it is possible that either or both sides would seek to maximize quality through construction of new submarines and retiring more older generation submarines.) Finally, the risk of the Soviet Union achieving a breakout, of violating the accord and putting U.S. national security at risk, seems minimal. If the Soviets fail to destroy as they build, it would be relatively easy for the U.S. Navy to match Soviet actions with similar suspensions of submarine decommissionings. The reduction in force levels would be spread over a 10 to 15 year period. Thus, the breakout potential of any single year would be insignificant.

The naval arms control options explored above differ from many current proposals in that each of the three would save money and improve the security of the United States. Rather than struggling with esoteric confidence-building measures (CBMs) that focus on counting the number of sailors involved in an exercise and the weight limit of ships (such as are required by many existing or proposed CBMs) or wasting efforts on concepts such as painting nuclear-capable ships a different color, arms control proponents should turn to proposals that offer financial savings combined with improving the national security of the United States.

The three agreements outlined in this article would fulfill all the important principles that should guide the formulation of arms control proposals:

- They offer fiscal savings;
- They are achievable without destabilizing the U.S.-U.S.S.R. balance of power;
- They would improve the military posture of the United States;
- They are verifiable without intrusive measures and with current "national technical means"; and,
- They lend themselves to structured responses by the United States to violations by the other party to the treaty.

Further examination of naval arms control might well turn up additional areas that would fulfill these requirements. However, the current absence of a leadership role in the discussion of these issues on the part of the uniformed navy for fear that the navy will be caught in a web of agreements not of its choosing forestalls any such examination within the U.S. government and actually increases the likelihood that the navy will be faced with naval arms control proposals that are fundamentally flawed. Without a calculated approach to naval arms control, the United States leaves itself open to initiatives from other parties and appears to be obstructionist rather than constructive in the search for world peace. While this in itself is not a strong basis for entering into an arms control agreement, benefits in the battle for

world public opinion are one more argument supporting an effort to find a viable and security-enhancing proposal in the naval arms control arena.

A serious independent examination might return the verdict that naval arms control falls outside long-term U.S. interests, and that entry into such arms control will open a Pandora's box of virulently dangerous possibilities. In the absence of such work, however, and without continuing reexamination of naval arms control issues, the United States might be missing a significant opportunity for financial savings combined with increases in security.

It is time to examine naval arms control from a fresh perspective.

It is time to forget "Just Say No!"

It is time to think "Just Say Maybe."

## Notes

1. Admiral C.A.H. Trost, USN, "The Soviet Naval Arms Control Offensive: Cut the Cards—Watch the Dealer," delivered to the Baltimore Council on Foreign Affairs, 7 March 1988, as published in *Vital Speeches*, 1 May 1988, v. LIV, no. 14, pp. 421-424.

2. Another argument focuses on the fact that the United States is a maritime power and the Soviet Union is a continental power and that, therefore, the United States cannot afford to have a navy only equal to that of our principal adversary. Entering into a discussion of arms control, however, does not necessitate an agreement based on equality—it would be foolish for the United States to agree to an arrangement that would abandon the U.S. Navy's capability to control the seas in the event of war.

3. This paper was written in May 1988. Due to clearance for public release constraints, the author is restricted in his ability to update the paper. The defense budgetary outlook today is much more restrictive than when the paper was written.

4. The current method most frequently used for paring the defense procurement budget is to either extend the purchase time or reduce the size of a buy of a weapons system program. While each of these techniques leads to current year reductions in outlays, they also lead sometimes to enormously higher per unit costs.

5. The list of principles enumerated here differs somewhat from the classic objectives of arms control as outlined by Thomas Schelling and Morton Halperin in their seminal 1961 work, *Strategy and Arms Control*. They wrote that efforts in arms control should contribute to "the avoidance of war that neither side wants, in minimizing the costs and risks of arms competition, and in curtailing the scope and violence of war in the event it occurs." The last of the three is an objective that is left out of the set of principles articulated here, for it seems likely that when (if) war comes, arms control will go out the window. Thus, any attempt to regulate wartime behavior is a speculative effort at best. For a discussion of the continuing relevance of Schelling and Halperin's book see a series of articles under the heading "Has Arms Control Worked?" in the May 1989 *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, pp. 27-45.

6. Many analysts seem to believe that security is a zero-sum game; that if one side gains the other loses. This is not necessarily the case. An agreement that improves U.S. national security does not, a priori, weaken the Soviet national security situation—and vice versa. This is not just in the "rosy glasses make the world better" view of arms control; true improvements in the correlation of military forces can occur for both sides through a well-thought out agreement. However, it is always important to remember that it is not a requirement that U.S. negotiators look out for Soviet interests—the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs can do that well enough on their own. We should be concerned with advancing U.S. interests through arms control.

7. An integral part of any arms control agreement should be delineation of options that will be available to respond to violations in an agreement. In sending an agreement limiting strategic forces to Congress for ratification, for example, an administration should include a package of options for responding to violations by the other side. Options such as building to match surpassing of treaty limits or construction of alternative systems on a proportional basis should be included in such a package. This would protect the American people from a situation in which a treaty is violated by the other treaty signatory but the political will to respond to the violations cannot be found (whether it is lacking in Congress or in the

President can change with administrations). Such an approach to arms control would also discourage violations of agreements by either signatory.

8. This is a very important goal for an arms control agreement. Often forgotten in the general rapture about the intermediate-nuclear force (INF) agreement is the probability that fulfilling the agreement and implementing the verification procedures will cost more than the cost of maintaining the affected forces in Europe. While the agreement represented a great stride forward in reducing superpower tensions, its high fiscal cost is a major flaw.

9. Most notably prior to and at the Malta summit in December 1989. For a sample of earlier Soviet commentary, see: "Akromeyev Notes U.S. Resistance to Naval Cuts," FBIS-SOV-89-209, 31 October 1989, pp. 1-3; "Chernavin Proposes Fewer Mediterranean Ships," FBIS-SOV-88-079, 25 April 1988, p. 1; "Gorbachev Speech on Northern Rear Admiral Viewed," FBIS-WER-87-085, 2 December 1987, pp. 6-7; Veniamin Mashin, "For Stability in the Mediterranean," *International Affairs* (Moscow), June 1987, pp. 90-95; and Captain William Manthorpe's, (USN, Ret.) discussion in "The Soviet View," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, November 1988, pp. 137-138.

10. See, for example, the September 1987 issue which was subtitled the "Superpower Arms Race at Sea."

11. For example, the *Neptune* papers jointly published with Greenpeace.

12. For example, Admiral Hill's work *Naval Arms Control* published in late 1988 and a number of articles in the *Proceedings* (such as retired Rear Admiral James A. Winnefeld's Arleigh Burke prize winning essay, "Avoiding the Conventional Arms Control Bottle," published in the April 1989 issue).

13. For example, see Lieutenant Commander Sam J. Tangredi, USN, "Anti-Submarine Warfare and 'Arms Control': An Inevitable Collision?" *Naval War College Review*, Winter 1989, pages 66-85.

14. Prior to the Malta summit, the Soviet "naval arms control offensive" of recent years had yet to reach the negotiating table as far as I am aware. Thus, there had not been a formal proposal for U.S. arms negotiators to respond to.

15. William Arkin, *Neptune Papers No. 1: The Nuclear Arms Race at Sea*, Washington, D.C., Greenpeace and the Institute for Policy Studies, October 1987, page 38.

16. See Captain Linton F. Brooks, USN, and Franklin C. Miller, "Nuclear Weapons at Sea," *Proceedings*, August 1988, p. 43, which discusses the need for a threat against Soviet shore targets to deter Soviet use of nuclear weapons at sea.

17. This discussion focuses on surface denuclearization because limits on submarine weapons deployments would be unverifiable with current technical means without extremely intrusive verification measures unlikely to be acceptable to either side. Ivo H. Daalder and Tim Zimmerman, for example, in "Banning Nuclear Weapons at Sea: A Neglected Strategy," *Arms Control Today*, November 1988, pp. 17-23, proposed a total ban on nuclear weapons at sea (with the exception of SSBNs). Their proposal was predicated upon intrusive verification of weapon suites aboard submarines—something the U.S. Navy would view with great disfavor, at best.

18. Floyd D. Kennedy, Jr., "Sea Services: Naval Arms Control," *National Defense*, July/August 1988, p. 10.

19. U.S. Congress, House Committee on Armed Services, Seapower and Strategic and Critical Materials Subcommittee. *Hearings on Military Posture and H.R. 2970*, Feb-Apr 1981.

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