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Naval Operations in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939

by

Willard C. Frank, Jr.

No nation lives in a vacuum. The Spanish Civil War of 1936-39 was a product of the admixture of converging indigenous tensions and the plight of the broader civilization of which the Spanish people form a part. The maritime war remained throughout the Spanish conflict the result of just such a confluence of Spanish and foreign decisions, forces, and actions. This combination was a crucial element in the course and outcome of the Spanish war and an integral factor in Europe's downslide toward the Second World War.

General Emilio Mola and his fellow conspirators almost lost the Spanish Civil War the moment they began it. The "Popular Front" government of the Spanish Republic had exercised only a tenuous control over an increasingly polarized and disorderly nation. Determined to save the unity of the fatherland and rid it of leftist ideologies, Mola and a few trusted associates planned and launched the military uprising of 17 July 1936. Their preparations were flawed in one near-fatal respect; they ignored control of the sea.¹

Mola's strategy called for the best units of the seasoned and politically reliable Army of Africa, a third of the entire army, to cross the Strait of Gibraltar from Spanish Morocco, converge rapidly on Madrid, and topple the government. The plan required a seaborne expedition, yet the conspirators made no attempt to secure naval forces to safeguard the passage. They assumed that the Spanish Navy would remain impotent and neutral, a delusion of vital consequence.

On the eve of the uprising, the suspicious Republican government ordered warships to patrol the straits as a precaution. Other warships of doubtful loyalty were put under surveillance. With the outbreak on 17 July of the attempted seizure of power, or *pronunciamento*, leftist crewmen spread the word from radio room to radio room and embarked upon a revolution of their own. Radical petty officers and junior officers deposed untrustworthy

commanders and created a loose but surprisingly effective command network of shipboard committees. Flying Republican battle ensigns, almost the entire operational fleet quickly gathered in the straits and isolated the insurgent Army of Africa in Spanish Morocco.

In the Iberian Peninsula, the uprising cleaved the poorly equipped armed forces into nearly equal proportions, but the elements of the left enjoyed a superior strategic position and the resources of the state, the cities, and the arsenals.² In these conditions General Mola, short of ammunition and facing a popular uprising, could not break through the mountainous Guadarrama barrier to Madrid. It is most likely that had the Army of Africa been introduced into the Peninsula in the first weeks, even the untutored enthusiasm of workers-in-arms could not have prevented the fall of Madrid and the collapse of resistance. But with the failure of the rebel *pronunciamento* and the collapse of Mola's strategy, the issue hung in the balance and time was with the Republic. The situation called for immediate and drastic action, and each side saw salvation in foreign assistance.

The Operational Strengths of the Republican and Nationalist Fleets, 1936-1939

Date	Battleships		Cruisers		Destroyers		Submarines		Aux, Cruisers (armed merchant ships)	
	Rep.	Nat.	Rep.	Nat.	Rep.	Nat.	Rep.	Nat.	Rep.	Nat.
July 36	1	1	3	1	10	1	12	0	0	0
Sep 36	1	1	3	1	14	1	12	0	0	0
Dec 36	1	1	2	2	13	1	10	0	0	10
March 37	1	1	2	3	15	1	8	0	0	9
July 37	0	0	2	3	15	1	8	2	0	8
Nov 37	0	0	2	3	13	3	7	2	0	11
Apr 38	0	0	3	2	13	3	7	2	0	10
Feb 39	0	0	3	3	9	5	6	3	0	11

The uprising caught all foreign governments unprepared, although Italy, and perhaps Germany, had been forewarned by rebel agents.³ The maritime nations—Britain, France, Italy, Germany, and the United States—quickly dispatched naval squadrons to Spanish waters to evacuate “endangered” countrymen and to uphold their national interests, both economic and strategic. Warships would remain throughout the war, the German Navy sending a disproportionately large contingent, virtually its entire surface fleet. As the first flurry of evacuations subsided, ships settled into a routine of maintaining a presence in Spanish waters, as much because of the existence of each other in the area as the unpredictable actions of the warring Spaniards. Naval officers of all these nations personally and openly favored the rebel cause for its stated objective of establishing law and order and rooting out communism.⁴





Meanwhile, during the first days, General Francisco Franco in Spanish Morocco sought Italian and German aircraft with which to break the Republican naval blockade and begin to ferry his troops to the peninsula. In the north Mola was desperately short of ammunition and separately begged both Mussolini and Hitler for vital logistic support. After a brief hesitation, both dictators acceded to a limited intervention, mostly aircraft and aircrews. The leftist Republican government of José Giral, acting in near panic, similarly pleaded for French help, and military aircraft secretly began to cross the Pyrenees. By the end of July the first trickle of what would become a torrent of aid flowed to both sides. Spaniards thus abandoned reliance on their own meager resources and mortgaged their fortunes to foreigners.⁵

The stakes were high. Few in France or even in rebel Spain trusted Mussolini not to grab for the Balearics or Spanish Morocco. Mussolini indeed coveted bases from which he could easily ravage vital French strategic routes in the western Mediterranean. The Italian military were likewise apprehensive of a French grab for these same base sites. From time to time both rivals contemplated a preventive occupation. The Spanish upheaval also led Germany soon to warm to the prospect of naval bases on the Spanish Atlantic frontier. Both Germany and Italy coveted Spanish minerals to compensate for their economic deficiencies.⁶

The chief of the French naval staff, Admiral François Darlan, actively but unsuccessfully approached Britain to create a joint and forceful Anglo-French policy with naval backing to prevent Italian or German aggrandizement at the expense of Spain and of French security. The British government, overextended, desperate to reduce the number of its potential enemies and anxious to avoid any test of strength, refused Darlan's initiatives. Rather, Britain leaped to support French Premier Léon Blum's long-shot proposal for a nonintervention agreement among the European nations, a fall-back position dictated by the delicate internal political balance in France and her requirement to retain Britain as an ally in the event of war.⁷

Operations in Spain quickly demonstrated that the proper utilization of resources is as necessary as their acquisition. The first flight of Italian S.81 bombers, dispatched in late July to Spanish Morocco, concentrated in the straits to harass Republican warships while Franco gathered a major troop convoy in Ceuta to cross the sixteen hostile miles to Algeciras. Opportunity came on 5 August when the bulk of the Republican fleet steamed off to Málaga to refuel, leaving only two destroyers behind. Each of these vessels was powerful enough to ravage the convoy and its puny escort, but Franco took the risk. Ordered into action, the Italian aircraft put one destroyer out of action and kept the other busy dodging bombs while the convoy safely plodded across the straits protected by the remaining S.81s. Republican and

French fighter aircraft, dispersed around the countryside, never appeared. This episode set the pattern. Nationalist and Italian elements jointly made daring and effective use of available forces, and won the day.⁸

Franco dared send more troops by undefended and lumbering German JU-52 aircraft, for the Republican air force, even with its new French fighters, continued to stay away. The Republican fleet, which had hurried back to close the gate, watched impotently as a steady stream of transports droned overhead. Without the services of Italian and German aviators, Franco's army would have remained marooned in Africa, but on 6 August with 4,500 of his men already on the peninsula, 3,500 of whom had come by sea, Franco flew to Seville to take command and to rise to prominence and eventual supremacy in the rebel junta.⁹

"In the early months of the war the Republic enjoyed the statistical and strategic elements of victory, but did not pull itself together or see clearly enough to take advantage of them."

The maritime war revolved around the vital flow of foreign arms to both sides. A process of logistic escalation soon began. The adherence of France to nonintervention and reports of increased German and Italian aid led the Soviet Union reluctantly to take up the slack in September 1936. Exaggerated reports of Soviet shipments led to major increases of German aid in November and Italian in December. By erroneously believing the absolute worst, the intervening nations by year's end were committing themselves to support far beyond what any of them had contemplated three months earlier.

Accessible records do not provide a precise comparison of military aid and its rate of flow. All that can be said with any degree of assurance is that a rough equilibrium prevailed from late 1936 until late 1937, when the collapse of the northern front and the success of Italian-Nationalist attacks on Soviet shipments tilted the scales increasingly toward the Nationalists. The balance tottered but never lurched.¹⁰ Some of the larger aircraft were ferried by air to Spain, and some volunteers and materiel crossed the French frontier, but roughly 80-90 percent of the military value of all foreign support followed a maritime route.¹¹

The balance of aircraft shipments in the first weeks gave way to the Nationalists who benefited from a definite advantage by September 1936. This was the product of an earlier Italo-German decision to provide a wide assortment of the staples of modern war—the necessary support for an early victory. Without other recourse, Stalin was persuaded to play the same game. From 10 October Soviet merchant ships delivered increasing amounts of materiel, including the current best fighters in the skies and the best tanks of the entire war. By the onset of the Battle of Madrid in November, Soviet

aid was creeping up to match that delivered to the rebels, fewer aircraft but far more tanks and heavy guns. A reappraisal following the failure of the assault on Madrid then led to increases in Italo-German logistic support to keep pace.¹²

There were for the first four months no serious attempts to block the flow of supplies by sea, only tirades by opposing ambassadors in London who formed the ineffective Non-Intervention Committee. There were also paper declarations of blockade by both Spanish parties, and a brief attempt by Republican warships to control shipping to Cádiz and Seville, which only resulted in arms shipments being diverted to Lisbon and Vigo.¹³

Slowly through the late summer and early autumn of 1936 the Italian and German navies followed policy shifts toward a more active role in the war. Naval staff officers organized arms shipments and kept them secret. Warships shepherded convoys through the flimsy blockade established by the Republican Navy. Naval vessels transmitted to the Nationalist authorities valuable intelligence, even so far as trailing the Republic fleet at sea and openly transmitting periodic position reports. The Italian Navy, and shortly after the German Navy, established official liaison offices at the Nationalist naval headquarters.¹⁴

Republican Spain knew of most of these activities, but could only issue appeals to world opinion. The French naval staff, taking the threat of combined Italian-German-Spanish naval operations very seriously, prepared contingency plans to combat such a menace. The British Admiralty, bent on making amends with Italy after the fiasco of sanctions over Ethiopia, ignored the danger and again refused cooperation with France.¹⁵

Meanwhile, in late August and early September the newly appointed Republican Navy Minister, Indalecio Prieto, and the Central Committee of the fleet, changed the course of the war with two disastrous decisions. The first was the unnecessary evacuation of a Catalan-sponsored expedition of volunteers that had established a beachhead in Mallorca during August-September 1936. The militiamen were on the verge of victory, despite the intervention of a few Italian aircraft, when the Republican Navy withdrew its support. Prieto and the petty officers running the fleet were no strategists. The evacuation resulted in the island becoming a central base, the only one available, for the entire Nationalist-Italian campaign to control shipping in the Mediterranean.¹⁶ Italian naval forces in Balearic waters under the aggressive leadership of Captain Carlo Margottini, immediately acted with Fascist organizers to ensure a firm Italo-Nationalist control over all of the Balearic Islands except Republican-held Menorca, for which the Italian naval staff prepared invasion plans.¹⁷

The second was the decision to send the bulk of the Republican fleet to the northern ports along the Bay of Biscay, then being harassed by the lone

operational cruiser in rebel hands, *Almirante Cervera*, leaving only a few destroyers to guard the far more critical straits. On 3 September, Prieto consulted with his chief naval adviser, Captain N. G. Kuznetsov, but the Soviet officer raised no objections, only later realizing that it was a terrible blunder. No sooner had the Republican fleet been distributed among the northern ports, when Captain Francisco Moreno on 29 September arrived in the straits with the two available Nationalist cruisers, *Almirante Cervera* and the hardly completed *Canarias*, and surprised and decisively defeated the light forces patrolling the straits. This Battle of Cape Spartel was the turning point of the naval war.¹⁸ The Republican Navy would never regain the initiative or its confidence, while the Nationalist Navy would never lose them. It was the best possible inaugural gift to the newly appointed Generalísimo Franco.

Until then a continuing but slow airlift and a few furtive convoys early in the war had managed to introduce only 16,000 troops of the Army of Africa into the peninsula. Now the gate was open. The cruisers shepherded 8,000 more within a few days with perhaps 50,000 soldiers and recruits to come. Nine out of every ten Nationalist soldiers engaged in the struggle for Madrid over the next several months had been shipped into the peninsula from Africa. Vital American oil shipments to Franco, previously diverted to the Canary Islands, now safely flowed to the thirsty Nationalist war machine in the peninsula.¹⁹ The Republican fleet sneaked back to its Cartagena base leaving the seas west of Almería without contest in Nationalist hands.

Having once secured the straits, the Nationalist Navy first tentatively then boldly probed the Mediterranean, opening a protected route for arms shipments from Italy to Cádiz, and with Italian help slowly built Mallorca into a formidable operating base. Cartagena and Palma de Mallorca are so situated that they could base naval forces that could readily interdict each other's supply lines. The Republican fleet was far superior to the force which the Nationalists could deploy against it, but Franco's naval chief of staff, Admiral Juan Cervera, and the fleet commander, Captain Moreno, were enterprising officers with a plan, whereas the junior officers and command committees directing the Republican fleet had yet to exhibit unity or decisiveness and Captain Kuznetsov's advice had so far proved useless. In these conditions the war for the supply routes was about to begin.²⁰

Just when Soviet arms shipments from the Black Sea were reaching decisive proportions, its route came within enemy range from Palma de Mallorca. The Soviet government took the initiative, issued strategic orders to Kuznetsov, who passed them on to the Republican Navy as recommendations that could not be rejected. A Republican strategic plan to invade Mallorca once more, to close the straits, and to harass German and Italian supply lines, was laid aside. Republican naval leaders had finally begun to think strategically, and as Admiral Cervera later admitted, it was a feasible and well-considered strategy which could not have been successfully

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defeated by the Nationalist forces then available.²¹ Yet opposition to Soviet direction of the war waned to ensure a sense of unity and collaboration—a necessity, since Republican fortunes were harnessed to Soviet aid. From October 1936 to November 1938 Soviet officers remained in virtual control of the Republican Navy, and did not reveal their most important operational plans even to the Spanish fleet commander until the moment of implementation.²² The experience of the Republican Navy was not unique. Soviet and Spanish Communist influence permeated the entire war effort and led to a dangerous and debilitating struggle for power within the Republic, whereas Franco and his associates deftly blocked the imperial appetite of their dangerously ambitious friend, Mussolini.²³

The Soviet strategy imposed on the Republican Navy was narrowly defensive and was essentially derived from assumptions of inevitable material inferiority to imperialist navies which could only be defeated by a kind of proletarian guerrilla warfare at sea. In Spain, the Republican Navy had the material and geographical capability to carry the war to the enemy, but Kuznetsov imposed a strategy relegating the fleet to be not much more than an escort service for Soviet supply ships on the last leg of their run into Mediterranean ports.²⁴ Strongly guarded convoys did reach safety, but this strategy allowed Nationalist, Italian, and German warships the uncontested use of the seas for the safe transit of their supply ships, for attacks on

“From October 1936 to November 1938 Soviet Officers remained in virtual control of the Republican Navy and did not reveal their most important operational plans even to the Spanish fleet commander until implementation.”

unescorted or weakly protected ships in the Republican supply line, and for raids and threats against the Republic's coastline. Cervera and Moreno eagerly seized the opportunities thus handed them, and with quite inferior forces probed Republican weaknesses and struck fear along the coast.²⁵

By mid-October 1936, Germany and, to a lesser degree, Italy were operating an increasingly efficient and accurate intelligence network. Consular officials from Odessa to Istanbul to Marseille became adept shipwatchers and forwarded constant reports on possible arms shipments. The Italian Navy, aided by the German warships detached to Mediterranean waters, established regular patrols in the Strait of Sicily, the Strait of Messina, and on western Mediterranean shipping lanes leading to Spanish ports to intercept, track, and report the progress of Soviet vessels. The watch over the movements of Republican warships continued.²⁶

Armed with an intelligence picture denied his opponents, Franco had decided by 20 October to sink arms ships heading for the Republican zone,

even if it meant violating the neutral status of the Soviet flag. He urged Italy and Germany to send their warships into action, for Nationalist warships were too few for the task. When the Axis partners did not respond with immediate enthusiasm, Admiral Cervera was forced to rely on Spanish resources and on 5 November issued orders for Spanish warships to do what they could to intercept and attack Soviet arms ships.²⁷ Cervera was becoming desperate, for Soviet aircraft and tanks were by then making Nationalist prospects in the looming Battle for Madrid increasingly doubtful. Franco and Cervera felt secure in attacking Soviet-flag merchant ships, for they harbored a rightly low opinion of the capability of the Soviet fleet to challenge their actions and accurately concluded that no other navy would step forward on Russia's behalf. Yet attacking Soviet ships would not be easy, for they were closely escorted on their approach to Spain by Republican squadrons more powerful than anything the Nationalists could send to meet them. Again Franco turned to the Axis for help.

At first he tried air attack. After repeated urgings, Franco persuaded the new German Condor Legion to bomb Republican naval and supply ports, but its raids were ineffective.²⁸ The Italian *Aviazione Legionaria* was even less prepared for maritime war. Cervera saw a solution in clandestine submarine warfare.

Shortly after the war broke out, the Spanish naval attaché in Paris, the dedicated and capable submarine officer Lieutenant Commander Arturo Génova, gave up his post to join the insurgents. Regretting the complete lack of submarines in Nationalist service, he scoured friendly Europe shopping for two craft with which to prosecute the maritime war. Despite his excellent connections, including Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, he found no nation willing to cede submarines to Spain. Nevertheless, his arguments were heard. In Germany, Admiral Erich Raeder and his chief of staff, Admiral Günther Guse, considered that German policy in Spain was dangerously indecisive and, putting their ideas before Hitler on 22 August, recommended that if Spain was worth intervention, that intervention should be vigorous enough to ensure victory, including the dispatch of U-boats. In Italy, Mussolini allowed negotiations to proceed for some sort of submarine aid short of outright cession, which was strongly opposed by the Italian Navy. In October two submarines were earmarked for eventual secret operations.²⁹

Génova's hopes of yet obtaining the outright possession of submarines melted when the Nationalist Navy had to admit that for some time to come it would not be able to muster sufficient crews to man any submarines, or even to begin to substitute Spanish for Italian personnel on a gradual basis. The best Cervera could do was to provide six Spanish submarine officers, including Génova, as "adjunct commanders" attached to Italian boats. This found Italian acceptance, and on 21 October the Spaniards were secretly

transported from Tangier to La Maddalena on an Italian destroyer. Assigned submarines had all their distinguishing lettering painted out and flew the Spanish flag on the surface, the attached Spanish officer to pose as the commanding officer of a Spanish submarine if challenged. Instructions authorized such Italian craft to torpedo Spanish Republican warships wherever they could be found, but Republican and Soviet merchant ships only within the international three-mile limit of the Spanish coast. Positive identification was mandated before any attack.³⁰

The first war cruise began on 8 November, two days after Italy joined the other naval powers in signing the Submarine Protocol which continued in force the provisions of the naval treaties outlawing such unrestricted submarine warfare, and one day after Soviet equipment did much to halt the Nationalist attack on Madrid. Submarines *Naiade* and *Topazio* lay off Republican Mediterranean ports for about a week, and in spite of plentiful targets there was no success. Inexperienced and cautious Italian commanders had difficulty getting into firing position, and had to break off attack runs to dodge foreign warships and fend off Republican destroyer attacks. Most frustrating was the constant inability to make positive identification of targets, for Republican and Soviet arms ships sailed without flags and with name painted out. Italian skippers worried lest they exceed their instructions in hostile action against two states with which Italy still maintained diplomatic relations and concerning which it had signed a Non-Intervention Agreement.³¹

Meanwhile, on 24 October, Hitler informed Ciano that he too planned to complement the Italian effort by sending two submarines to Spain. On 2 November, the German naval high command, the OKM, began planning for "Training Exercise Ursula," its codeword for the projected German participation in clandestine submarine warfare. Two fresh products of a building program just begun, *U-33* and *U-34*, were readied for this only available war experience. On 17 November the German and Italian navies agreed to alternate war patrols along the Spanish Mediterranean coast, the German craft to be on station between 30 November and 11 December. Only the Italian boats carried Spanish officers, and the Nationalists were never even informed that operation "Ursula" existed. The Axis partners agreed that should a charge of responsibility be leveled at either government as a result of successful attacks, they would "express ignorance and the greatest surprise." The next day the German and Italian governments formally recognized the Franco regime, and on 21 November the pristine *U-33* and *U-34* secretly set out for Spain.³² Two days later Germany joined in signing the Submarine Protocol.

At that time the Italian *Sciesa* and *Toricelli* were on patrols which duplicated the frustrations of the earlier pair. Italian and Spanish eyes glued to periscopes could not identify the nationality of loaded freighters passing by

them at night into Republican harbors, though once safely inside, Soviet flags would be proudly displayed the next day. The break came on the morning of 22 November, when *Torricelli* (Lieutenant Commander Zarpellon commanding, and Lieutenant Commander Génova attached) sighted the Republican flagship, the cruiser *Miguel de Cervantes*, with the battleship *Jaime I* and other warships quietly lying at anchor in the open roads off Cartagena. The fleet was thus exposed on the advice of Captain Kuznetsov as an air raid precaution. A possible shot at the battleship was prevented by HMS *Glowworm* which inadvertently crossed the attack path, but the cruiser presented her broadside to two torpedoes which ripped into her machinery spaces at 0855. Efficient damage control saved the flagship, but *Miguel de Cervantes* was out of action for most of the war, tied up valuable drydock space, and could never reach speed again.³³

Republican experts examining torpedo fragments thought the culprit to be German, while the British Admiralty and Foreign Office rested on the comforting assumption that it must have been a defected Spanish boat. French intelligence concurred with British findings, but French naval leaders were less trusting, and revived their plea for Anglo-French staff talks and contingency planning. Again Britain rejected any move that might antagonize Italy or Germany, leading the French Navy unilaterally to increase its presence in the waters of Italian-occupied Mallorca. British and French intelligence did not know what even tourists in Italy knew, that Mussolini was sending "secret" submarine expeditions against the Spanish Republic.³⁴

As Germany joined the signatories of the Submarine Protocol, *U-33* and *U-34* slipped into Spanish waters unseen and were on station by 30 November. The OKM authorized as targets all Republican warships, and within territorial waters any darkened warship or escorted merchant vessel. The Republican Navy was no longer careless, but traffic was plentiful. Inexperienced crews and defective torpedoes prevented success in five attack runs, producing worries in Berlin that the Republic might recover a dud torpedo, and cause unwanted repercussions.³⁵

Meanwhile, the war was dragging on with increasingly effective Republican defense and an unchecked flow of Soviet arms. An attempt was made to achieve startling results with an Italo-Spanish air and naval attack on Republican supply ports, but coordination remained poor and an underlying resentment surfaced between the Italian and Spanish commands as each tried to exercise authority. The results were ineffective. Such combined operations were not attempted again. Admiral Guse, the senior German staff officer, became distressed over the splintering of command in a war that was now directly involving three distinct navies; but varying political goals, the desire for secrecy, and national pride combined to prevent meaningful coordination, much less unity of command.³⁶

In early December Mussolini, frustrated by lack of progress in the war and prodded by Goering, decided to send a large contingent of troops to Spain, increased the submarine pressure, and tried to get the German Navy to step-up its blockade operations. He encountered German reluctance to expand its participation in clandestine naval warfare, with its risks of uncontrolled complications, or even to hold joint staff talks. Mussolini countered with the suggestion that German submarines blockade the Republic's Biscay ports while the Italian fleet would control the Mediterranean. After a series of secret meetings, Hitler decided even against this, and on 10 December General Werner von Blomberg, as chief of the German high command, issued the orders to restrict further German intervention and to return the deployed submarines to Germany. The next day Admiral Raeder informed Admiral Domenico Cavagnari that from the moment that German submarines would be relieved by their Italian counterparts, a process already begun, the German Navy would restrict its efforts in Spanish waters to the escort of German supply ships to Atlantic ports; and, thus, "to relinquish to the Royal Italian Navy an authoritative influence over the Spanish conduct of naval warfare, since it is the opinion of the OKM that the responsible advising of the White [Nationalist] conduct of naval warfare can only be carried out from *one* position in the interest of a unified conduct of the war and that this assignment is appropriately being taken over by the Royal Italian Navy." Mussolini responded on 14 December, accepting full responsibility for clandestine naval warfare, but requesting the retention of a German surface squadron for reconnaissance purposes. This Hitler allowed, but again refused to act on Mussolini's reiterated appeal for staff talks. The most Mussolini got was an Italian-German-Spanish intelligence code for reconnaissance communications.³⁷ The Third Reich would avoid the risks of an escalation in intervention, while increased Italian participation would keep the Spanish cauldron boiling, divert attention to Italy and the Mediterranean, and thus provide Hitler a free hand for opportunities elsewhere. Operation "Ursula" was over.

But not quite. *U-33* and *U-34* had achieved no hits during twelve days operating within their instructions, when by chance on 12 December *U-34*, on her way out of the operating area at periscope depth, sighted the patrolling Republican submarine *C-3* on the surface off Málaga. Lieutenant Commander Grosse fired a single torpedo which found its mark at 1419. *C-3* disappeared in a tremendous explosion. There were few survivors and no evidence. Remembering the attack on the *Miguel de Cervantes*, the Republican government first assumed the responsibility of a foreign submarine, but the official navy investigation concluded that the cause was an internal explosion, and there the matter has rested until this day. *U-33* and *U-34* were home by Christmas, back from a "training exercise." At the end of the Civil War the crews of both boats

were paraded before the Führer who made some vague laudatory remarks. The world never discovered why.³⁸

On 13 December six Italian submarines took station off Republican ports to be relieved by a similar array two weeks later. For shipping at the target ports, submarine and torpedo sightings became increasingly frequent. Their paternity became clear when an intact Italian torpedo ran up on a beach near Barcelona, the Republican Navy putting it on display for the world to see. Italy hotly denied the charge.³⁹

Frustrated by the restrictive instructions and the lack of daring which prevented Italian submarines from exercising a decisive influence on the maritime war, Nationalist officers pressed anew for the transfer from Italy of several destroyers and submarines along with looser instructions for Italian boats. Admiral Cervera unsuccessfully argued for substantive relief along these lines to Admirals Angello Iachino and Hermann von Fischel in Cádiz on 29 December, but the most either nation was to offer was the cession of some fast motor boats and assistance with mine warfare. The Italian Navy allowed a slight loosening of instructions to permit nocturnal shore bombardments on occasions, but only if secrecy could be maintained. Cervera came away with but a small bit of his naval shopping list.⁴⁰

The Italian submarine operations remained far below Nationalist expectations. In the first two months of 1937, 24 Italian submarines patrolled Spanish coasts, scaring many vessels but sinking only 2 Spanish-flag steamers. From the beginning until mid-February, 42 Italian submarines had tracked 133 suspicious vessels, had positively identified only 15 as being acceptable targets, and had launched 27 torpedoes. Yet the score was only one damaged cruiser and two freighters sunk, and no Russian shipment stopped.⁴¹

In the meantime, Nationalist cruisers and patrol craft had been halting Soviet merchant ships on the high seas in search of arms cargoes. Although numerous vessels were harassed and some ships and cargoes were confiscated, no arms shipments were found. The only possible exception was the motorship *Komsomol*, a frequent arms carrier, which was sunk south of Cartagena by the cruiser *Canarias* on 14 December with a cargo yet to be verified. The *Komsomol's* captain and the Soviet government have denied to this day that she was carrying war supplies.⁴²

Spanish and Axis naval activity did not stop Soviet logistic support, but it certainly put it in jeopardy. Increasingly alarmed, the Soviet government readied a naval force including the cruiser *Krasnyi Kavkaz* and several destroyers to steam to the western Mediterranean to protect Soviet shipping and eventually to exercise nonintervention duties in the Bay of Biscay. It was quickly discovered that the condition of the ships was too poor and the crews too inexperienced for extensive operations far from friendly ports, and the project was cancelled.⁴³ Rather, the Soviets ceased to risk their merchant

vessels in the arms run, and began to rely almost entirely on large Spanish-flag vessels following the same Black Sea-Mediterranean route. Soviet and Rumanian oil in Spanish tankers plied the same lanes. The Republic fleet continued to provide close escort for the last 150 miles. Nationalist Spain and its Axis allies had yet to find a way to squeeze off this flow.

By late 1936 the total value of foreign aid to the Republic had risen probably to equal that supplied to their opponents. The trend was immediately reversed by a massive influx of Italian men and materiel, 54,000 troops with all of their equipment by mid-March, escorted to Cádiz by the Italian Navy. Improved German and Italian aircraft appeared on the scene while the Soviets retained their superiority only in tanks.⁴⁴ The balance had shifted to the Nationalists to allow for the occupation of Málaga, but not enough to compensate for poor planning at Guadalajara. It remained a very closely fought war.

Meanwhile, the British government was looking for a way to enforce the Non-Intervention Agreement and prevent all arms shipments to Spain. The Cabinet in January 1937 rejected the suggestion of Foreign Secretary Eden that the Royal Navy engage in a massive display of gunboat diplomacy to blockade all Republican and Nationalist ports.⁴⁵ The Non-Intervention Committee also wrestled with the problem of enforcement but only produced an ineffective control system of naval surveillance and observers aboard merchant ships bound for Spain to certify that no war supplies were aboard.⁴⁶

Beginning in April 1937 British and French warships stood watch over Nationalist ports but found no violations of the Non-Intervention Agreement, for German arms ships flew the flag of exempt Panama, and Italian materiel arrived in exempt Spanish vessels and Italian "naval auxiliaries." There had been a general expectation in Germany and Italy that the control scheme might actually curtail their arms traffic but evasion was absurdly easy. Axis naval vessels patrolled Republican ports, but since by then arms flowed exclusively in exempt Spanish vessels, their nonintervention duties only provided a handy cover for intelligence gathering. Only the trickle across the French frontier was further reduced by the control system. Oil and motor vehicles were not considered contraband and continued to flow, United States firms continuing to supply the bulk of Nationalist needs in both categories and British tankers replacing Spanish and Soviet ships with Black Sea oil. Generally, the European nonintervention system and the American embargo of military aid operated in favor of the Nationalist cause and increased the logistic dependence of the Republic on the Soviet Union.⁴⁷

On the other hand, the Anglo-French nonrecognition of a state of belligerency acted in the Republic's favor. The Royal Navy reluctantly accepted the responsibility to protect the flag on the high seas, and escorted

British ships with nonmilitary cargoes to the three-mile limit off Republican ports. Nationalist naval forces in command of the Bay of Biscay attempted to maintain a tight blockade and operated within the spirit of international law. The Royal Navy upheld its letter. A series of tense confrontations punctuated the spring and summer of 1937 in the waters off the Cantabrian coast. The Royal Navy had preponderant force, was omnipresent, and won the contest. Scores of tramp steamers under British registry circulated through the beleaguered port cities of northern Spain, discharging the sustenance of life, boosting morale; and evacuating nonmilitary refugees, thus increasing the capacity of the region, otherwise encircled by hostile troops and warships, to resist. The maritime umbilical cord provided by the Royal Navy kept the north alive long enough to give the Popular Army time to prepare and launch its Teruel offensive before Franco could regroup his veterans of the northern campaign for a planned operation against Madrid.⁴⁸

"The Spanish Civil War demonstrates Napoleon's maxim that in war the mental is to the material as three is to one."

To offset the increased flow of Italian aid in the winter of 1936-37, the USSR stepped up its shipments, which peaked in May and June and perhaps tilted the balance by July or August. But the collapse of the northern front in October destroyed the balance and it cost the Republic a fourth of its army and significant quantities of materiel, including 123 aircraft.⁴⁹ In addition the opposing navies and their foreign allies labored throughout 1937 to find ways to turn the naval war into decisive channels. The Axis-Nationalist team found productive ways; the Soviet-Republican one did not.

In Cartagena, Captain Kuznetsov—with 76 fellow Soviet naval advisers plus submarine and motor torpedo boat commanders—was not able to transcend self-limiting assumptions. They simply could not come to terms with the proper employment of a powerful surface fleet of cruisers and destroyers, which, when it was not escorting convoys, just remained in port rather than taking action against the weaker enemy. The battleship *Jaime I* was reduced to a useless floating battery in Almería. On the few occasions when cruisers did put to sea for shore bombardment, they were more to counter eroding morale among idle crews and to pacify public opinion rather than to implement a strategy.⁵⁰ Ironically, the Spanish Communist Party was the most outspoken critic of the passivity of the Republican fleet, but "*La Pasionaria*" and her colleagues never realized that Republican naval strategy emanated from Moscow.⁵¹

A more assertive strategy was needed. However, Kuznetsov and his comrades could only think of the weapons of the weak Soviet fleet for an "active defense"—naval aircraft, submarines, and motor torpedo boats.

Efforts were concentrated on these units, all to be commanded directly by Soviet personnel.

The attempt to build a Soviet naval air arm in Spain was a complete failure. Prieto and the Soviet air chief at first resisted Kuznetsov's pleas, but by March 1937 they donated the services of a few SB-2 medium bombers with which to harass the rebel navy. The aviators involved had extreme difficulty identifying the nationality of warships, and so their activities were severely restricted to reduce the risk of error. Nevertheless, in May 1937 untrained Soviet relief pilots mistakenly bombed an Italian naval auxiliary and the German pocket battleship *Deutschland*, causing a major international incident and provoking the German bombardment of Almería as a reprisal. Soviet pilots never learned; for, time and again, they attacked the Republican warships they were called upon to assist. Kuznetsov and Republican officers constantly expressed their exasperation at the failure of the air arm to provide adequate cooperation. The only success of these pilots was to damage the cruiser *Almirante Cervera* in February 1938. The Soviet pilots never attempted to attack arms convoys from Italy.⁵²

Heeding Kuznetsov's request, Moscow dispatched ten submarine officers to take charge of the Republican submarine force. Four of the original twelve boats had already fallen to German and Nationalist attacks and the rest were in need of overhaul. Lieutenant Commander I. A. Burmistrov and his colleagues expended much effort in preparations and endless sea trials, but they made only timid war patrols. Sightings of surfaced Republican submarines off Mallorca prodded the Nationalist Navy into improving its antisubmarine precautions. That was all. Eight active submarines achieved absolutely nothing.⁵³

The motor torpedo boat was a staple of the Soviet fleet, so on Kuznetsov's request, four of the small G-5 boats arrived aboard a transport in May 1937. They were relegated to harbor duty in Cartagena, and only once were employed in a major operation, a surprise raid on the Nationalist naval base at Palma de Mallorca in March 1938. Even then the boats could not face the swells encountered and did not make the attack. However, the main fleet was at sea in a supporting role, and accidentally encountered the Nationalist cruiser fleet off Cape Palos. Captain N. A. Pitserskii, Kuznetsov's more forceful successor who served from November 1937 to November 1938, called for immediate action and Ubieta, the Republican chief, only reluctantly obeyed. Although torpedoes calibrated by Soviet technicians sank the Nationalist flagship *Baleares* and left the remaining Nationalist cruisers in disarray, Ubieta refused to follow this success with a hard-pressed attack, and instead headed for Cartagena where he was soon relieved of his duties.⁵⁴

None of the special Soviet-directed efforts to engage in "active defense" by aircraft, submarine, or motor torpedo boat had brought the least success. The submarines were wasted. Thanks to Pitserskii's quick-witted

resourcefulness, the neglected surface fleet had won a startling if limited tactical victory, yet neither Kuznetsov nor Piteriskii ever contemplated employing its potential as part of a strategic plan.

The Italian and German participation in the war proved far more effective, but their efforts were neither smooth nor always productive. A high level of tension continued among the naval officers of the three countries. Nationalist officers neither trusted Italian competence and intentions nor the meddling of either ally in Spanish direction of the war. Italian and German admirals exchanging calls vented their frustrations at what they saw as Spanish timidity, the refusal to seek out the enemy fleet for a decisive encounter. They also believed that incompetent Spaniards were wasting valuable equipment donated for the war effort. Personal and national jealousies were rife on all sides.⁵⁵ Spaniards continued to implore Italy to cede warships: the cruiser *Taranto*, five to eight destroyers, and a similar number of submarines. After many delays, partly due to resistance within the Italian Navy, two new submarines and four old destroyers were turned over to the Nationalist Navy, but Admiral Cervera and General Franco kept calling for more.⁵⁶

Some operations achieved little. Nine German and Italian fast motor boats proved no more effective than their Soviet counterparts. Italian motor torpedo boats transferred to attack the Republican battleship *Jaime I* in its forward base at Almería, were insufficiently seaworthy to approach the harbor without being towed, eliminating the possibility of surprise. German S-boats did lay offensive minefields which achieved five hits on merchant vessels in Spanish waters, but they did nothing to reduce the arms traffic. The most significant, if dubious achievement of German mines, was to sink accidentally the Nationalist battleship *España* in April 1937 and to damage seriously the British destroyer *Hunter* two weeks later. Risking international exposure, Italian cruisers and surfaced submarines on seven separate occasions in early 1937 shelled the port areas of Republican cities. These shellings produced little damage, no panic, and much Spanish and foreign resentment of Italy as the probable perpetrator.⁵⁷

Submarines were more effective. Italy abandoned the use of her own craft, with their cumbersome restrictions and lackluster results, as soon as she delivered the *Torricelli* and *Archimede* to Nationalist Spain on 17 April 1937. Under the Spanish flag, they were at first disguised as the "missing" Republican *C-3* and *C-5*, and when that ruse became transparent, they took the names *General Sanjurjo* and *General Mola* after fallen Nationalist heroes. Under the command of Spanish officers who had gained much experience in Italian boats and with mixed Italian and Spanish crews, they were on war patrols by 13 May. Between 30 May and 29 July they had sunk four and damaged six Republican merchant ships, none, however, with Soviet arms

shipments. These were heavily escorted, fourteen convoys from the Black Sea safely arriving at Cartagena between 28 April and 4 August. Two Spanish submarines, however unrestricted, were not enough. But neither did they risk attacks on escorted merchant ships.⁵⁸

At the beginning of August Franco received mysterious intelligence reports which seemed to signal the passage through the Turkish Straits of a convoy of five large Soviet freighters, escorted by three Soviet submarines, from Odessa to Spain—with 2,600 tanks, 300 aircraft, similar vast quantities of other equipment, and all the requisite maintenance personnel. Franco, who had just beaten back a dangerous Soviet-equipped offensive at Brunete, took these absurd figures seriously. They appeared to be exaggerated and were not confirmed by German or Italian intelligence, but indications of a major escalation of Soviet intervention could foretell disaster. Franco wrote to Mussolini on 3 August that the situation was so ominous as to require the most “urgent and energetic remedies.” Franco requested a thorough reconnaissance with Italian destroyer patrols to block the Strait of Sicily, these ships to engage in hostilities either under the Italian flag or, with attached Spanish officers, under the Spanish flag.⁵⁹

Italian foreign minister Galeazzo Ciano, at least, was dubious about the report, but the Spanish quagmire was producing a serious attrition in Italian military supplies and restricting Italian options for action, so that any action that might speed victory was not totally unattractive. While a bemused Hitler looked on from afar, Mussolini placed a naval barrier in the Strait of Sicily and sent air reconnaissance flights far to the eastward. Between 5 and 7 August fifteen submarines put to sea with orders, at first, to sink only unescorted Soviet transports. The operation was already underway when Nicolás Franco, the Generalísimo’s brother, arrived in Rome to press Mussolini into taking the proposed action. Mussolini resisted the massive and open use of destroyers against the Soviet flag, but agreed to station submarines in the Aegean and along the Spanish coast, with the destroyers in the Strait of Sicily authorized to make nocturnal attacks.⁶⁰ On the 7th the Italian and Nationalist staffs agreed to the least restrictive instructions for Italian naval operations of the entire war. Fair targets would be all Republican warships, all Republican or Soviet merchant ships, all merchant ships of whatever flag underway at night in a darkened condition within three miles of the Spanish coast, and all merchant ships under escort of Republican (and at night darkened) warships.⁶¹ Restraints were thus greatly relaxed and the geographical scope widened. Pouring out from Italian bases were 52 submarines, 41 cruisers and destroyers, 2 naval auxiliaries masquerading as Spanish cruisers, and squadrons of reconnaissance bombers, all prepared for clandestine war. Yet these forces combed the Mediterranean without finding the reported convoy. It never existed.⁶²

A momentum, however, had built up; any Soviet merchant ship in the Mediterranean was presumed guilty of arms traffic, and Spanish-flag vessels

continued to ply the trade routes with Soviet arms, so the operation was not cancelled. From 5 August until 12 September half of the Italian fleet patrolled the Mediterranean and the Aegean from the Dardanelles to Spanish harbors with increasing effectiveness and embarrassment. To maintain secrecy, submarines bore no distinguishing marks; destroyers attacked only at night, and the auxiliary cruisers flew the Nationalist flag. The attempt at concealment was transparent. Submarines brazenly surfaced in broad daylight near suspected merchant ships, their Italian profiles clearly outlined. Destroyers made no attempt to disguise their Italian identity as they trailed their targets by day and torpedoed them by night. In a month of activity submarines made 438 attack runs on suspected targets and carried 23 of them through with torpedo action. Destroyers made four successful nocturnal torpedo attacks. Altogether they sank seven Spanish and five foreign merchant vessels, two of them Soviet. Of these twelve ships, probably five carried war cargoes and five were loaded tankers. Italian auxiliary cruisers captured two merchantmen, one Spanish and one British. Submarines attacked Republican warships, heavily damaging one destroyer. There were mistakes. Italian reconnaissance pilots made repeated attacks severely damaging the well-marked Italian freighter *Mongoia* off Algiers. Submarine torpedoes narrowly missed the Italian destroyer *Turbine* and the British destroyer *Havock*, which made a determined but unsuccessful counter-attack.⁶³

The maritime campaign had grown far beyond anything contemplated earlier. Nowhere in the Mediterranean was it safe, and British, French, Greek, Danish, Panamanian, and Italian vessels found themselves sharing the fate of the Spanish Republican and Soviet flags by being the targets of deliberate attacks. Newspaper editorials denounced "submarine piracy" and called for strong measures. Paris wags renamed the Boulevard des Italiens as the "Boulevard des Inconnus." Shipping companies demanded action.

The British government carefully refrained from accusing Italy of these outrages even though it had full knowledge of Italian responsibility. The Admiralty's Operational Intelligence Center, established just a few months before, was decrypting Italian naval messages and tracking Italian submarines as they went about their "secret" war. The OIC accurately predicted Italian action, but the British government could not warn endangered merchant ships or expose Italian operations without compromising the work of the OIC. More fundamentally, Chamberlain and his military chiefs still believed that the security of the British Empire was better served by appeasing Italy and thus removing her from the list of potential enemies. The inherent fallacy was not perceived.⁶⁴

Where France would have preferred to meet the challenge directly, the problem for Britain was to make the sealanes safe without alienating

Mussolini. Foreign Minister Eden and the Plans Division of the Admiralty considered holding the Franco government responsible and forcing it to bring Italian raids to an end by such forceful actions as sinking the Nationalist cruiser *Canarias* or blockading the Nationalist coast. Such operations would have been costly and not likely to reduce the Mediterranean crisis, and the Plans Division arrived at a more promising strategy, to attack and sink "pirate" submarines found along the sealanes without accusing any nation of responsibility. Meanwhile the French Navy decided that it could not adequately protect French shipping and that the circumstances called for joint action with Britain. On French initiative, therefore, an international conference at Nyon was called for 10 September to deal with the crisis. The British plan was quickly adopted. Immediately, patrols of British and French destroyers watched the Mediterranean trade routes, attacking several supposed submarines. By the end of the month Italy acceded to British appeals to contribute her own destroyers to the "anti-piracy" patrols. The French government and British and French destroyer commanders did not know what Eden and Admiral Chatfield knew, that cryptanalysis had already demonstrated that Mussolini had terminated the operation.⁶⁵

Mussolini, long inured by reactions to his earlier interventions no stronger than newspaper alarms, had little expected such a strong response now. It was the most forceful resistance to Axis moves of the entire prewar period. On 3 September the Franco high command expressed its satisfaction at the results achieved to date, asked for the continuation of Italian war operations through the month of September, but recommended "maximum precaution" with British ships. By this time, however, British and French reactions were attaining ominous proportions; the Italian Navy was following orders with a sense of uneasiness about its honor, and nobody was believing Mussolini's continued claims of innocence. The next day Italian operations in the western Mediterranean were suspended, and those in the eastern basin and the Aegean were terminated shortly after. The Nyon conference had achieved its objective even before it met.⁶⁶

Mussolini craved a glorious victory in Spain, and could not miss the fact that when Italian troops entered Santander on 26 August with all the propaganda trappings of a liberation, the world raised no protest, but the naval actions at the same time brought the threat of a massive international naval reaction. Franco was clamoring for more troops, aircraft, and equipment for the land war, and so Mussolini ordered a major escalation in the levels of his men and materiel in Spain. But when Franco also called for the transfer of two more submarines to the Spanish flag, Mussolini refused. Rather, on 13 September Mussolini offered Franco an approach to clandestine submarine warfare less dangerous and extensive than that recently cancelled. Four Italian-manned "legionary" submarines would temporarily join the

Nationalist Navy but operate under Italian restrictions. All Republican vessels and those under escort by the Republican Navy were fair game, but no foreign vessels outside of Spanish territorial waters and no British, French, American, or Japanese vessels in any case were to be attacked.⁶⁷

The "legionary" submarines operated from the Nationalist submarine base of Soller on Mallorca from 17 September 1937 until 5 February 1938, their patrols hugging the Spanish coast. Each of the four boats hosted a Spanish officer while an Italian officer joined Admiral Moreno's staff. The Italians were now very cautious in the application of their instructions, and made only three attacks with unconfirmed success. Meanwhile, however, the two submarines Italy had earlier transferred to the Nationalist Navy, now increasingly proficient and with crews entirely Spanish, continued to attack foreign merchantmen trading with the Republic, sinking a Dutch and a British freighter in January. The blame continued to cling to Italy despite Italian denials, and the Nyon patrols hunted submerged submarines with renewed vigor.⁶⁸

The Nationalist surface fleet, reinforced with new construction and merchant conversions, was also becoming increasingly successful against shipments of Soviet arms, achieving a major triumph over a three-ship Republican convoy in September and a large armed transport in October. Since early August Italian and Nationalist attacks had allowed no ship with Soviet aid to reach the Republic.⁶⁹

These attacks took too great a toll for the Soviet Union to sustain. In addition Stalin was disappointed that his efforts had not increased his security, and he had just made a major arms commitment to Chiang Kai-shek to help China resist Japanese invasion. At the end of September the Soviet Union abandoned the Mediterranean route completely. The new route chosen was cumbersome, expensive, and time consuming—from northern Soviet ports by sea to France, then overland to Spain. The French government, still legally bound by the Non-Intervention Agreement, opened the frontier to the passage of waiting Soviet supplies when French politics allowed and the situation in Spain demanded. Soviet shipments by the new route commenced only in December and at a reduced scale—largely aircraft, small arms, and ammunition. Italian and German arms continued by sea at a steady pace. In 1938 the logistical support to Franco's forces became significantly greater and more reliable than that to his opponents. Even so, the total accumulated military aid did not produce a major disparity. Through the course of the war the Nationalists probably received somewhat more and better aircraft, fewer and worse tanks, more and better artillery, many more men, and somewhat more and better general military supplies than their Republican opponents.⁷⁰

With the Soviet abandonment of the Mediterranean artery and the prohibitive operational and political risks in attempting a major naval war

against Soviet shipping in distant northern European waters, Nationalist maritime efforts refocused on civilian commerce with the Republic. Rather than risking further international complications with submarines, Mediterranean strategy shifted to an air offensive. The prime target was civilian morale. From their Mallorcan bases, Italian bombers pounded harbors by day, while German seaplanes raided shipping at sea by day and in harbor by night. Cooperation among the German, Italian, and Spanish commands was never good, but the division of labor was effective and proficiency increased with time. Early indications of success led Mussolini to order a full-scale maritime bombing offensive commencing on 16 March 1938. Raids became continuous, severely reduced the supplies needed to maintain the civilian population, and did serve to undercut morale. From the end of the Italian naval campaign in September 1937 until the end of the war, Italian and German aircraft sank 115 Spanish and 51 foreign merchant ships, which were about three-fourths of all the vessels lost due to Italian and German action during the entire war.⁷¹ During these same months an additional 225 bombing attacks on shipping resulted in less than complete loss, though often the cargo would be ruined. This destruction of food, clothing, coal, oil, and medical supplies was a devastating blow to a population burdened by political struggles, military defeats, and constantly swelling ranks of destitute refugees.

Britain, suffering most of the foreign shipping losses, contemplated an "air piracy" pact to parallel the Nyon Arrangement, but concluded that it would be too difficult to implement. Foreign warships scurried to the scene of reported attacks on the high seas, only to arrive too late for anything but to rescue survivors. Nothing could be done to protect ships in Spanish waters. Britain and other affected governments could only issue periodic protests, while they and their numbed people came to resign themselves to these air attacks like bad weather.⁷²

A Nationalist spearhead broke Republican lines and reached the Mediterranean in April 1938, dividing Republican territory and requiring its navy to put all remaining energies into keeping open communications between zones. Escorted convoys plied between Valencia and Barcelona, usually unmolesed, while Axis aircraft concentrated on undefended ships. In all, three-fourths of all the foreign and one-fourth of all Spanish vessels lost to enemy action succumbed to German or Italian attacks.⁷³ By the collapse of the Catalan front in 1939 the Republican Navy was still largely unscathed, but defeats and inactivity had destroyed morale. Soviet naval advisers gradually went home, leaving the wreckage of their strategy behind. The mastery of the sea had shifted into more able hands.

In the early months of the war the Republic enjoyed the statistical and strategic elements of victory, but did not pull itself together or see clearly

enough to take advantage of them. From late 1937 until the end the Nationalists increasingly enjoyed these advantages. In the critical year from October 1936 until October 1937, it was a close match in the fighting ashore and in the battle for logistics.

Foreign aid to both sides remained generally balanced through most of the war, clearly favoring the Nationalists only after their victories in the north and in the Mediterranean. The lack of great disparity has masked the complete reliance each side had on outside transfusions of the lifeblood of war. Had the flow been completely stopped to either side, especially in the first year of the conflict, it probably would have proved decisive.

Certainly Italy and probably the Soviet Union preferred a military victory in Spain. Both were willing to contribute massively to the conflict so long as the results were worth the cost. Germany retreated from overcommitment in late 1936, and was thus free to gain experience without reducing her warmaking potential or limiting her options elsewhere.

Differing ends or means divided allies. Whereas Hitler wished to extend the Mediterranean crisis, Mussolini wished to conclude it. Italian intervention began for glory and strategic advantages, and ended with neither, but with depleted war stocks with which to face probable enemies of much greater industrial capacity. Mussolini pleaded in vain to Hitler for a greater German share of the load, while Franco was incessantly pressing for greater and more risky Italian contributions. For the Duce the Spanish road became a quagmire. In a similar fashion, the French government failed to secure British help to contain Italian ambitions in the Mediterranean. Nyon was the only partial exception.

Neither was there full internal harmony. Mussolini throughout the war, and Hitler in November and December 1936, were more willing to employ naval force in Spanish waters than were the reluctant Admirals Cavagnari and Raeder. On occasion a similar tension existed between the Foreign Office and the Admiralty in Britain, but in France Admiral Darlan and the naval staff were far more desirous of a strong military stand against Italy in the Mediterranean than were the various French governments of the time.

Had the Republic retained supremacy at sea and established an effective blockade, for which its navy had sufficient material and geographical assets, major Italian and German intervention would have been politically and militarily very costly, if possible at all. In such conditions, even if the Republic had been denied access to major foreign arms supplies, a Republican military victory would have been possible. A viable Republican naval strategy at least would have allowed the war to drag on another six months until it would have merged with the Second World War. In that case the Franco regime in Spain would likely have shared the ultimate fate of its Fascist and Nazi allies. As it was, however, the war at sea smoothed the way for Axis logistic support and made that from the Soviet Union costly and

uncertain. The Republic and its Soviet ally were responsible for creating the conditions for their own defeat, just as the Nationalists and their Fascist and Nazi allies created the conditions for their military victory in the Spanish Civil War.

The Nationalists and their allies won, not through a superabundance of supplies or manpower, but because they used what they had to much better effect. Ashore, where the Popular Army dispersed its ground and air forces and were thus left wanting in battle, Franco, spurred on by aggressive German officers, concentrated superior forces at the desired point of impact, thinning the line elsewhere, and thus broke Republican defenses. At sea, the Republican Navy lost supremacy because it lacked sufficient able and strategically capable leadership to be able to take advantage of the power of the fleet and withstand the imposition of a self-limiting Soviet strategy. Thus the initiative and the use of the seas remained with the enemy without a contest. The defection or isolation of most professional naval officers from the Republican Navy produced a gap the Soviets were unable, and competent Republican officers were not invited, to fill. The Nationalists not only enjoyed proficient leadership from the beginning, but collaboration with relatively aggressive and effective allies.

The Republic could have won the military contest only had she received a sizable differential in material aid, which the noninterventionists and the Nationalist and Axis naval and air forces combined to prevent, or had she received far better strategic direction, which Republican dependence on the Soviet Union likewise prevented. Stalin's material aid kept the Republic temporarily alive, but his military advisers helped dig its grave. The Spanish Civil War demonstrates Napoleon's maxim that in war the mental is to the material as three is to one. The Republic and its Soviet ally did not lack the equipment, but the mind, for victory.

The intervening navies and their nations gained little from the Spanish Civil War. Both Italy and Germany expected naval bases and raw materials as compensation for their intervention. Franco blocked the first completely and slowly doled out the second until he was able to stop payments completely in the Second World War.

The success of the maritime air war in 1938 led both Germany and Italy to rest with the assertion that separate naval air arms were unnecessary, and only when it was too late during the coming war was this conclusion proved wrong. The Spanish experience did lead Soviet naval leaders to pursue the necessity of an effective navy-controlled air arm, but there was little to show for their efforts in the next war. Nevertheless, naval officers of all countries falsely concluded from the Spanish conflict that naval vessels underway had little to fear from air attack, and the improvement of shipboard anti-aircraft defenses was dangerously delayed.⁷⁴

The extensive use of convoys and submarines in the Spanish war seemed to have no effect on Britain and France, for their navies continued to train for

fleet actions not a renewed Battle of the Atlantic. Only the United States took the naval war for Spain sufficiently to heart to make it the basis for the US Fleet Problem XX in early 1939.⁷⁵

Most dramatically and powerfully, the Spanish war demonstrated to Soviet leaders their inability to control a foreign intervention without a powerful naval force at their disposal. Soviet intervention in Spain was a causal element in Stalin's bid for seapower and the eventual creation of an oceanic navy.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the Soviet naval strategy which failed in Spain was employed again in much the same way in the Soviet war for survival, and with just as dismal results.

In the final analysis, both the interventionists and the noninterventionists failed to achieve the political goals sought. The Western democracies wanted peace, but through such as their Spanish policies, earned war. The Soviet Union tried to create an antifascist alliance with the West, but only won enmity by her actions in Spain. Fascist Italy sought prestige and power, but lost both in the Spanish whirlpool. Nazi Germany assured herself through experiences of the Spanish sort that Western courage was irrevocably degenerate and, therefore, nothing could seriously imperil her ambitions—only to discover too late that this was not so. The sole eminent and permanent success was Francisco Franco. Internal and international circumstances helped to ensure his durability; yet, Franco's great skill at getting what he wanted at little or no cost to his interests should be recognized as a measure of the man's ability.

Notes

1. The best scholarly treatment of the military conspiracy is Ricardo de la Cierva, *Historia de la guerra civil española*, I (Madrid, 1969), pp. 765-792. Materials for the study of the navy are collected in Servicio Histórico, Estado Mayor de la Armada, Ministerio de Marina, Madrid. The most relevant files for the uprising are in Archivo Rojo, N. C. 25-13: V and N. C. 2502-14, and Archivo Anterior y Posterior del Movimiento, N.C. 25-15, Sec. 2 and N.C. 321-7. The fullest published treatment is José Cervera Pery, *Alzamiento y revolución en la marina* (Madrid, 1978).

2. The army in 1936 had only 12-13 tanks, and the air force no bombers and only 157 serviceable combat aircraft. For the available military strength and its division in 1936, see Ramón Salas Larrazábal, *Historia del ejército popular de la república*, I (Madrid, 1973), pp. 185, 190-196; Salvador Rello, *La aviación en la guerra de España*, 4 vols. (Madrid, 1969-72); and Javier de Mazarrasa, *Los carros de combate en España* (Madrid, 1977), p. 72.

3. Angel Viñas, *La Alemania nazi y el 18 de julio*, 2nd ed. (Madrid, 1977), pp. 128-140, 299-311; Pedro Sainz Rodríguez, *Testimonios y recuerdos* (Barcelona, 1978), p. 232; Goicoechea to Capri, 14 June 1936, Archivo Storico-Diplomatico, Ministerio degli Affari Esteri, "Spagna, Fondo di Guerra," Ufficio Spagna [hereafter MAE-US], busta 5, fasc. 3.

4. I have consulted the naval archives of all these nations, from which this and following general statements on naval activities emerge.

5. Among the many accounts of the origins of foreign aid, Viñas looms largest. For Italy, see John F. Coverdale, *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War* (Princeton, 1975), pp. 66-84, supplemented by Sainz Rodríguez *Testimonios y recuerdos*, pp. 232-40, 385-387. A general treatment is Fernando Schwartz, *La internacionalización de la guerra civil española*, 2nd ed. (Barcelona, 1972).

6. There is much evidence for such strategic and economic interests. As examples, for Italy see Ciano's *Diplomatic Papers* (London, 1948), pp. 144-145. A full statement by the naval staff is contained in the "Pro-Memoria" of 12 October 1935, Archivo Centrale dello Stato, "Ministerio della Marina, Gabinetto

del Ministro, Archivo Secreto, 1934-1939" [hereafter ACS-MM, AS], pacco 195. German designs are well summarized in Carl-Axel Gemzell, *Organization, Conflict, and Innovation: A Study of German Naval Strategic Planning, 1888-1940* (Lund, 1973), pp. 278-279, 291. The basic study of German economic interests in Glenn T. Harper, *German Economic Policy in Spain During the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* (The Hague, 1967). There is yet no adequate study of Italian economic interests, but the Italian Foreign Ministry records clearly demonstrate their importance. Spanish naval apprehensions are fully stated in the prewar issues of the official naval journal, *Revista General de Marina*.

7. The concerns of Darlan and the French Naval Staff are found in many sources. See, for example, the Darlan-Chatfield conversation of 5 August 1936 and the note of the Naval Staff of 20 November 1936 in *Documents diplomatiques Français, 1932-1939*, 2nd series, III, pp. 130-133, IV, pp. 11-13; and Robert J. Young, *In Command of France: French Foreign Policy and Military Planning, 1933-1940* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), pp. 136-139. Two excellent studies of British naval strategy in the context of the Spanish Civil War are Lawrence R. Pratt, *East of Malta, West of Suez: Britain's Mediterranean Crisis, 1936-1939* (Cambridge, Eng., 1975); and Stephen Roskill, *Naval Policy Between the Wars, II: The Period of Reluctant Rearmament, 1930-1939* (London, 1976), pp. 369-391.

8. Servicio Histórico, AN, N.C. 25-13:23, contains a full account. I have also utilized an interview with Admiral Manuel Súnico, the commander of the convoy, Madrid, 9 June 1976. The chief pilot's account is Ruggero Bonomi, *Viva la muerte: Diario dell' "Aviacion de El Tercio"* (Rome, 1941), pp. 34-37, 41-47. See interview with Republican crewmen in *La Armada*, 17 September 1938.

9. For the airlift, see "Das 'Unternehmen Feuerzauber,'" esp. pp. 36-40, RL 2 IV/1, Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg. For Republican fleet activities, see Servicio Histórico, AN, N.C. 2502-14. The many published summaries are mostly accurate.

10. Statistics on foreign aid, to say nothing about the military value they represent, are very elusive. Some are firm and documented; many are not. I have attempted an evaluation independent from the many estimates in print. I begin with official claims and modify them as other evidence requires, while retaining an attitude of suspicion toward possible exaggerations. As a basis I have used, for Italian aid, "Relazione finale sull' 'Attività dell'Ufficio Spagna.'" MAE-US, b. 9-10; for Germany, "Tätigkeitsbericht der Schiffahrtsabteilung (OKM A VI) im Dienste des Sonderstabes W während des Spanienkrieges," Anlage 5, Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, M 1388/80769; for the Soviet Union, *International Solidarity with the Spanish Republic* (Moscow, 1974), pp. 328-330; for France, David Wingate Pike, *Les Français et la guerre d'Espagne* (Paris, 1975), pp. 102-103, 107; and for Soviet purchases in Europe, *Istoriya vtoroi mirovoi voyny, 1939-1945*, II (Moscow, 1974), p. 53. The most ambitious attempt at an overall evaluation and synthesis so far is Jesús Salas Larrazábal, *Intervención extranjera en la guerra de España* (Madrid, 1974). Also of value is Robert H. Whealey, "Foreign Intervention in the Spanish Civil War," *The Republic and the Civil War in Spain*, ed. Raymond Carr, (London, 1971), pp. 213-238; and the debates in *Boletín de Orientación Bibliográfica* (May-June 1974), pp. 5-15, December 1974, pp. 5-29, January-February 1975, pp. 41-50, and June 1975, pp. 5-13. For estimating the relative rates of logistic flow through the course of the war, I have considered the evidence of men and supplies dispatched or delivered by certain dates as well as the incidence and carrying capacity of shipping transporting this aid. I have also considered the monetary value assigned to the aid. Key works are Angel Viñas, *El oro español en la guerra civil* (Madrid, 1976), supplemented by Robert Whealey, "How Franco Financed his War—Reconsidered," *Journal of Contemporary History*, January 1977, pp. 133-152; and R. Salas, *Historia del ejército popular*, II, pp. 2374-77.

11. My estimates of percentages of aid by sea according to their military value: Germany and the USSR 98 percent, Italy 80 percent (the bombers always flew), International Brigaders 30 percent, France 20 percent, and oil to either side 100 percent.

12. For the new German aid until October 1936: "Zu dem Stand der Bearbeitung der Geschichte der Legion Condor," a 5-part report which contains "Das 'Unternehmen Feuerzauber'" already cited, RL 2 IV/1, BA-MA. For Italian aid: the trustworthy and important report "La marina italiana en la Guerra de España," *Historia y Vida*, January 1977, pp. 121-122. For Soviet aid: N.G. Kuznetsov, *Na dalekom meridiane: Vospominaniya uchastnika natsionalno-revolutsionnoi voyny v Ispanii* (Moscow, 1966) pp. 103-104, 112; and his *Nakanune: Voennye memuary* (Moscow, 1966), p. 185. Kuznetsov is the most prolific writer on the Soviet naval participation in the Spanish Civil War, with many articles also to his credit. An abbreviated and sanitized version appears in *Bajo la bandera de la España republicana* (Moscow, 1965).

13. For the Non-Intervention Committee debates, see Stenographic Notes of Proceedings, 5th-11th Meetings, N.I.S. (36), FO 848/1, Public Record Office, London, and other locations. For the worries the Republican blockade caused Franco and Mola, see their correspondence in Servicio Histórico Militar, Archivo de la Guerra de Liberación, Documentación Nacional, A.6, L. 342, C.2.

14. There are extensive records on these activities in the Italian, German and Spanish naval archives.

15. The theme of French naval desire for resistance and British naval desire for appeasement runs through the records of both nations.

16. Alberto Bayo, *Mi desembarco en Mallorca* (Guadalajara, Mexico, 1944); José Manuel Martínez Bande, *La invasión de Aragón y el desembarco en Mallorca* (Madrid, 1970); Josep Massot i Muntaner, *La guerra*

civil a Mallorca (Montserrat, 1976); José Luis Alcofar Nassaes, *La aviación legionaria en la guerra civil española* (Barcelona, 1975), pp. 99-113. For the navy: Servicio Histórico, AAPM, N.C. 25-15, Sec. 7.

17. MAE, "Spagna," 1931-1945 [hereafter MAE-Sp.], b. 23, f. 4; MAE-US, b. 53, f. 3; ACS, "Ministerio della Marina, Gabinetto di S.E. Il Ministro," "Rivoluzione in Spagna: Missioni Segrete, Telegrammi [hereafter ACS-MM, Tel.], p. 165, vol. VIII.

18. Servicio Histórico, Archivo Nacional, N.C. 25-12:2, 25-13:7, 8; AAPM, N.C. 25-15, Sec. 10; Francisco Moreno, *La guerra en el mar* (Barcelona, 1959), pp. 110-116; interview with Republican participants in *La Armada*, 10, 17 December 1938. For Kuznetsov's admission of his blunder, see *Nakanune*, p. 140.

19. SH, AN, N.C. 25-13:7, 25-12:2, 25-13:8; AR, N.C. 25-13:II; José Manuel Martínez Bande, *La marcha sobre Madrid* (Madrid, 1968), p. 115; and his *La lucha en torno a Madrid: En el invierno de 1936-37* (Madrid, 1968), pp. 80-81.

20. Operational warships in September 1936, when relative strengths most favored the Republic, included: Republic—1 battleship, 3 cruisers, 14 destroyers, 12 submarines; Nationalists—1 battleship, 1 cruiser, 1 destroyer, 0 submarines. My evaluation of the human element derives from many sources, including interviews with both Nationalist and former Republican naval officers. As distinct from the direct participation of Soviet officers in the Republican navy, Italy and Germany maintained separate liaison offices.

21. The Republican plan is reported in Juan Cervera Valderrama, *Memorias de Guerra* (Madrid, 1968), pp. 24-25. I have yet to locate the original. Its main features were discovered by German intelligence and passed on to the Nationalists who informed Italy. See message, Zeno to Ministerio della Marina, 14 November 1936, ACS-MM, Tel., p. 165, vol. X.

22. Kuznetsov, *Na dalekom meridiane*, pp. 103-104, 109-119, 127-136, 183-184; *Nakanune*, pp. 140-147.

23. Examples of blocking Mussolini include the rush to shore up Mallorca in August 1936 (Sainz Rodríguez, pp. 326-328), Moreno's establishment of full control of Mallorca in October 1937, and the Nationalist occupation of Menorca with the help of HMS *Devonshire* in February 1939.

24. The best study of Soviet naval strategy in these years is Robert Waring Herrick, *Soviet Naval Strategy: Fifty Years of Theory and Practice* (Annapolis, 1968). The operations orders for the implementation of Kuznetsov's strategy are in SH, AR, N.C. 25-13:II. For Kuznetsov's account, see note 22.

25. SH, AN, N.C. 25-13:7; Moreno, *Guerra*, pp. 125-129.

26. Supporting data is full in both the Italian and German naval archives. For German activities, see especially PG 80725. An Italian summary is "La marina italiana," No. 106, pp. 120-125. Republican Spanish, British, US and French naval observers give full corroboration in reports in their respective naval archives.

27. Major Gallo to Ministerio di Guerra, 20 October 1936, MAE-US, b. 5, f. 3; Operation Instruction No. 1, SH, AN, N.C. 25-11; Cervera, *Memorias*, pp. 49-60.

28. Karl Drum, et al, "Die deutsche Luftwaffe im spanischen Bürgerkrieg," pp. 73-74, Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, LW1.

29. Lieutenant Commander Juan Génova has reported the details of his father's activities in *Historia y Vida*, January 1979, pp. 108-111. I have corresponded with the only surviving Spanish officer attached to Italian submarines, Admiral Rafael Fernández de Bobadilla, who has freely provided many insights. On the development of Axis policy, see BA-MA, RM 6/48, OKM Box 20, PG 48903; *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, III, pp. 50-52; ACS-MM, AS, p. 195; MAE-US, b. 1, f. 1, and b. 5, f. 3. Génova's critique of the entire operation is in SH, AN, N.C. 25-11:1.

30. MAE-US, b. 5, f. 3; ACS-MM, Tel., p. 165, vol. VIII. Most revealing is Admiral Cavagnari's report, "La Regia Marina e la Situazione Spagnola" of 1 November 1936 in MAE-US, b. 5, f. 3.

31. The operation can be traced in detail in the message file in ACS-MM, Tel., p. 165, vol. IX; and the reports of the attached Spanish officers in SH, AN, N.C. 25-13:25.

32. "Colloquio Ciano col Führer," 24 October 1936, MAE-US, b. 10, Allegato 1, B.4; "Ursula" file in BA-MA, RM 20/899, PG 80773. The instructions are contained in Anlage 1, KTB des BdA (Boehm), 6 November 1936-14 December 1936. This and the Italian-German agreement of 17 November 1937 are in the "Ursula" file.

33. Message files, ACS-MM, Tel., p. 165, vol. X; SH, AN, N.C. 25-13:25; Bruno Alonso, *La flota republicana y la guerra civil de España* (Mexico, 1944), p. 27; *Torricelli* war diaries in MAE-US, b. 1, f. 1; and SH, AAPM, N.C. 25-15:13.

34. *Glowworm* report in Public Record Office, ADM 116/3053; Note of French Naval Staff, and Delbos to Corbin in *Documents diplomatiques français*, 2nd series, IV, pp. 32-33, 35-36; French intelligence reports in Etat-Major Général, 2ème Bureau: Bulletins de Renseignements, 20 December 1936-13 January 1937, Service Historique de la Marine. For an example of what was common knowledge in Italy, see "Traveller" in *New Statesman and Nation*, 28 November 1936.

35. The full operational records, including a complete message file, are in the "Ursula" file, BA-MA, RM 20/899, PG 80773. I have carried on a fruitful correspondence with several German U-boat officers, and

especially with Admiral Gerd Schreiber, the sole remaining officer who participated in Operation "Ursula" in *U-34*, who has provided or verified much useful information.

36. Operation Order 11, 24 November 1936, SH, AN, N.C. 25-12:2; Guse to Raeder, 28 November 1936, BA-MA, RM6/49, PG 31769.

37. Exchange between Ciano and Attolico, 27 November, 2 December 1936, MAE-US, b. 10, Allegato 1, B.8. 10; The Italian Naval Staff report, "Collaborazione italo-germanica in Spagna," 4 December 1936, MAE-US, b. 1, f. 1; "Verbale della riunione a Palazzo Venezia del 6 Dicembre 1936," MAE-US, b. 10, Allegato 2; Blomberg to service chiefs, 10 December 1936, Raeder to Cavagnari, 11 December 1936; Lange (Naval Attaché, Rome) to Raeder, 15 December 1936, BA-MA, PG 33308.

38. *U-34* to BdA (Boehm), 12 December 1936; KTB des BdA (Boehm), 6 November 1936-14 December 1936, both in BA-MA, RM 20/899, PG 80773; Admiral Schreiber to author, 6 January 1978; Republican naval reports in SH, AR, N.C. 25-14:XI and N.C. 202-3; Fritz Otto Busch, *Kampf vor Spaniens Küsten: Deutsche Marine im spanischen Bürgerkrieg* (Berlin, 1939), p.222.

39. ACS-MM, Tel., pa. 166, vols. XII, XIII; *ABC de Madrid*, 11, 26 December 1936.

40. Cervera, *Memorias de guerra*, pp. 28-30; "La marina italiana," January 1977, pp. 124-125.

41. "La marina italiana," January 1977, p. 125; Admiral Fernández de Bobadilla to author, 22 September 1973.

42. An accounting of the Nationalist harassment of Soviet merchant ships is in SH, AN, N.C. 2503-103. Moreno's account of the sinking of the *Komsomol* is in N.C. 25-13:7. The story of the captain of the *Komsomol* is G. A. Mezentsy, "V fashistskom plenu," *Pod znamenem ispaniskoi respublikii, 1936-1939* (Moscow, 1965), pp. 541-575.

43. I. A. Ananin, *Korabli nashoi yunosti* (Leningrad, 1968), pp. 114-116. For the projected nonintervention duties, see Non-Intervention Committee N.I.S. (36), Memorandum 362, and N.I.S. (C) (36), Memorandum 36; Litvinov to Maiskii, 27 January 1937, *Dokumenty vneshnei politiki SSSR, XX* (1937), pp. 60, 697. There is much evidence to suggest that the conditions of the Spanish War led the Soviets to begin to regret the weakness of their fleet. See Kuznetsov, *Nakanune*, p. 257; and I. M. Maiskii, *Spanish Notebooks* (London, 1966), p. 106, for examples.

44. Complete details are in "Relazione finale sull'attività dell'Ufficio Spagna," MAE-US, b. 9-10. Summaries of this aid are in "La marina italiana," February 1977, pp. 119-120; Alcofar Nassaes, *La marina italiana*, pp. 129-134. The improved aircraft included the S.79, Bf-109, and He-111.

45. Cabinet Conclusion 1 (37), 8 January 1937, CAB 23/87, PRO.

46. The main work was done in the Technical Advisory Sub-Committee No. 3, discussed at length in the Chairman's Sub-Committee, and discussed further at the meetings of the full committee, which gave its approval on 8 March 1937. Implementation took even more work. The records are voluminous.

47. There are extensive records of the observations of the ships on control duty, they being particularly full for the British and German navies. Every ship sighted was logged and reported. US oil shipments are fully documented in US State Department Records, RG 59, 852.00 series, National Archives, Washington.

48. British and Spanish naval records contain all the encounters between warships, including the messages between commanding officers, which were very friendly when there was no merchant ship in dispute.

49. R. Salas, *Historia del ejército popular*, III, pp. 2939-41, 2977-73; Jesús Salas Larrazábal, *La guerra de España desde el aire* (Barcelona, 1969), p. 261.

50. Republican records are incomplete for this period. See SH, AR, N.C. 25-13:II, III, VI. For a Soviet view of *Jaime I*, see A. P. Labudin, "Na respublikanskom linkore," *Leningradtsy v Spanii: Sbornik vospominanii*, 2nd ed. (Leningrad, 1973), pp. 15-23.

51. For example, Dolores Ibarruri, *El único camino*, 3rd ed. (Mexico, 1963), pp. 365-367.

52. Kuznetsov, *Na dalekom meridiani*, pp. 167-169, 201-223; V. L. Bogdenko, "Stranitsy starykh bloknotov," *Leningradtsy v Spanii*, pp. 164-169; War Diary of von Fischel, 10 May 1937 to 29 June 1937, BA-MA M/1406-80843; Report of *Deutschland* incident in BA-MA, PG 80689

53. Kuznetsov, *Na dalekom meridiani*, pp. 187-197; A. M. Gurevich, "Na podvodnoi lodke cherez Gibraltar," *Leningradtsy v Spanii*, pp. 251-272; SH, AR, N.C. 25-13:II. For the Nationalist-Italian reaction, see ACS-MM, Tel., p. 225, vols. XVIII, XIX.

54. Kuznetsov, *Na dalekom meridiani*, pp. 197-201; N. Pitserskii, "Pod voennomorskim flagom ispaniskoi respublikii," *Problemy ispaniskoi istorii* (Moscow, 1971), pp. 185-193; Ubieta's report in SH, AR, N.C. 25-14:VI; Report of the senior survivor of the *Baleares* in SH, AN, N.C. 25-13:7.

55. There are many examples of tension in the Spanish, Italian, and German archives. A particularly scathing indictment of the Nationalist Navy by the chief Italian naval liaison officer is the lengthy report by Captain Ferretti, "Notizie e considerazione sulla Marina spagnuola bianca," 12 March 1937, MAE-US, b. 95, f. 2. Moreno's resentment is clear in Annex 1 to his Operation Report of 22 December 1936, SH, AN, N.C. 25-13:7.

56. For the transfers, see MAE-Sp., b. 31, f. 5; "La marina italiana," February 1977, pp. 121-122, March 1977 pp. 118-120.

57. For the activities of the MAS: ACS-MM, Tel., pa. 166, vol. XIV, pa. 167, vol. XVI, pa. 225, vol. XIX.

For the German S-Boat and mining operations: Report of Lieutenant Commander Petzel, 15 May 1937, BA-MA, PG 33309. Reports on *Hunter*: ADM 116/3521. For Italian naval activities; "La marina italiana," January 1977, pp. 125-126, March 1977, pp. 118-120.

58. A summary of the activities of the transferred submarines is in "La marina italiana," February 1977, pp. 121-122. The war diaries are in SH, AN, N.C. 25-13:24, 25. The escort operations of the Republican fleet are reported through the operations orders in SH, AR, N.C. 25-13:II.

59. Franco to Mussolini, 3 August 1937, MAE-US, b. 10, Allegato 27; Spanish Government to the Spanish Ambassador in Rome, 3 August 1937, *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, D, III, p. 432; Spanish Ambassador to Ciano, 4 August 1937, MAE-US, b. 95, f. 2.

60. Hassell to the Foreign Ministry, 5 August 1937, *Documents on German Foreign Policy* D, III, p. 433; Naval messages in ACS-MM, Tel., pa. 167, vols. XXI, XXII; "Processo Verbale (Riunione a Palazzo Venezia - 5 Agosto XV)," MAE-US, b. 10, Allegato 27.

61. Conversation between the Chief of Staff of the Italian Navy and the Under Chief of Staff of the Spanish Navy, Rome, 7 August 1937; Note, Spanish Embassy to Ciano, 11 August 1937, both in MAE-US, b. 10, Allegato 29.

62. Naval messages, ACS-MM, Tel., p. 167, vols. XXI, XXII; "La marina italiana," March 1977, pp. 124-126; naval summary in MAE-US, b. 10, Allegato 41.

63. Aside from the sources indicated in note 62, there is a complete series of reports of submarine and surface attacks in MAE-US, b. 10, Allegato 31. Italian submarine commanders only claimed 10 kills. There were actually 12. Data on sinkings came from many sources, including the records of the British and French navies.

64. Information from Vice Admiral Sir Peter Gretton, 1971-1974 and Vice Admiral Sir Norman Denning and Patrick Beesly, 1977; Patrick Beesly, *Very Special Intelligence: The Story of the Admiralty's Operational Intelligence Centre, 1939-1945* (London, 1977), pp. 9-15; Roskill, *Naval Policy II*, pp. 383, 388-389.

65. The British Admiralty, Foreign Office, and Cabinet records provide the fullest account of the Nyon Conference. The more sparse French naval records are found in "Guerre d'Espagne, 1936-39," SHM, Carton 40; supplemented by *Documents diplomatiques français*, 2nd series, VI. A useful summary is Peter Gretton, "The Nyon Conference—The Naval Aspect," *The English Historical Review*, January 1975, pp. 103-112.

66. Franco to Spanish Ambassador, Rome, 3 September 1937, MAE-US, b. 95, f. 2; *Ciano's Hidden Diary, 1937-1938* (New York, 1953), p. 9.

67. The Italian escalation of the land war is detailed in MAE-US, b. 10, Allegati 32-38, 41. For the "legionary" submarines: *Ciano's Hidden Diary*, pp. 8-9; Ciano to Viola, 13 September 1937, and Viola to Ciano, 14 September 1937, MAE-US, b. 95, f. 2; Génova to Cervera, 24 September 1937, SH, AN, N.C. 25-11; "La marina italiana," March 1977, pp. 118-120.

68. "La marina italiana," March 1977, pp. 119-120, the operating instructions are in SH, AH, N.C. 25-11; War diaries in N.C. 25-13, 24, 25.

69. SH, AAPM, N. C. 25-15, Sec. 24, 26; AN, N. C. 25-12:2

70. My estimates on the total foreign aid include: For the Republic: over 1,189 aircraft, 378 tanks, 1,798 cannon, 4 motor torpedo boats, and 40,000 men (no more than 19,000 at one time). For the Nationalists: 1,530 aircraft, 307 tanks, 2,210 cannon, 4 destroyers, 2 submarines, 10 motor torpedo boats and 97,820 men (no more than 47,000 at one time).

71. Some 144 Spanish and 75 foreign vessels were lost to Italo-German action (submarines, ships, aircraft, mines, confiscation). See Appendix I.

72. There are full records in the British Admiralty, Foreign Office, and Cabinet papers. Many of the corresponding French records were lost in World War II. Well over 90 percent of the affected ships were British.

73. Total Republican ship losses were 554, those by Italo-German action 144. Total foreign ship losses to Nationalists were 106, those by Italo-German action 75. Total Nationalist ship losses were 31, those by Soviet action 9. There were no foreign ship losses to the Republicans. These are working figures subject to revision. See Appendix I.

74. There is much implicit evidence in the German and Italian records. A full discussion of the naval air controversy in both Germany and Italy is in ACS-MM, AS, p. 313. For Kuznetsov's evaluation, see *Nakanune*, pp. 172, 257. A revealing correspondence concerning the naval lessons of the Spanish War, and particularly airpower at sea, is in *The Naval Review* running through vols. 25 and 26 (1937-1938).

75. Patrick Abbazia, *Mr. Roosevelt's Navy: The Private War of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, 1939-1942* (Annapolis, 1975), pp. 33-35.

76. Kuznetsov, *Nakanune*, p. 257.

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APPENDIX I

TOTAL APPROXIMATE FOREIGN AID BY CERTAIN CATEGORIES

PROVIDING NATION	AIRCRAFT	TANKS	ARTILLERY	WARSHIPS	PERSONNEL (at one time)
USSR	806	362	1,555	4 motor torpedo boats (MTBs)	3,000 (800)
Other pro-Rep.	383 plus	16	243	-	36,927 (18,000)
TOTAL PRO-REP.	1,189 plus	378	1,798	4 MTBs	39,927 (18,000)
Italy	763	157	1,801	4 destroyers ^a 2 submarines ^a 4 MTBs ^a	79,974 (40,000)
Germany	708	ca.150	409	6 MTBs ^a	16,846 (5,600)
Other pro-Nat.	63 ^b	-	-	-	1,000 plus (1,000)
TOTAL PRO-NAT.	1,534	307	2,210	4 destroyers 2 submarines 10 MTBs	97,820 (46,600)

^aclandestine naval operations excluded^bMoroccan troops excluded

**APPROXIMATE NUMBERS OF
MERCHANT AND NAVAL VESSELS LOST DURING THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR
DUE TO WAR ACTION**

REPUBLICAN LOSSES AND SHIPS SERVING THE REPUBLIC LOST OR CONFISCATED

	Total Spanish- flag ships lost to war action by any party	Spanish-flag ships lost to Italo-German action	Total foreign- flag ships lost to war action by any party	Foreign-flag ships lost to Italo-German action
1936	55	4	2	0
1937	327	33	30	20
1938	38	28	53	38
1939	77	39	21	17
unknown date	57	ca.40	-	-
Total	554	144	106	75

**NATIONALIST LOSSES AND SHIPS SERVING THE NATIONALISTS
LOST OR CONFISCATED**

	Total Spanish- flag ships lost to war action by any party	Spanish-flag ships lost to Soviet action	Total foreign- flag ships lost to war action by any party	Foreign-flag ships lost to Soviet action
1936	6	2	-	-
1937	7	2	-	-
1938	10	3	-	-
1939	3	2	-	-
unknown date	5	-	-	-
Total	31	9	-	-

All numbers are working figures subject to revision.

