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Western political and military leaders had some reason for satisfaction as they viewed the globe on the morning of D+30.

First, the war was still a conventional one. The past 30 days had seen tragic loss of life and terrible destruction, but nothing like that which would have attended exchanges of tactical nuclear weapons on the continent of Europe.

Next, in the face of the Warsaw Pact's huge offensive, Nato defenses still held. Although the forward edge of the battle area was now some tens of miles west of the initial defense lines on the inter-German border, Western defenses remained intact from the Channel to the Alps. There was, however, as yet no possibility of a counterattack to regain forward defense positions. And there was no way to replace the thousands of aircraft and tanks that had been lost in what was already clearly the world's most lethal war. One month into the war, fully 70 percent of the West's tanks and tactical aircraft had been destroyed; corresponding Warsaw Pact losses, thanks to Nato's quick response to strategic warning and the wholesale use of "smart weapons" of extraordinary accuracy, were substantially higher.

At sea, Nato had been successful everywhere—in the minds of some, incredibly so. Shipping on the Atlantic, Pacific and oil SLOCs was not significantly impaired, although this appeared to be more the result of a diffident Soviet submarine warfare campaign than in consequence of Allied ASW successes. The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron was on the bottom. While some Soviet diesel submarines remained in the Mediterranean, Nato ASW operations promised the near-term elimination of this threat.

Naval operations in the northern Atlantic and northwestern Pacific had been equally successful.

The Soviet offensive against northern Norway had been turned back, leaving key littoral airfields in Allied hands—thns making sustained Western naval operations in the Greenland, Barents and Norwegian seas possible. These same operations had pressed Soviet surface units back against the Mnrman Coast and into the White Sea, sinking many. The US Navy's ASW campaign in these waters had eliminated an important fraction of Soviet SSNs and SSBNs attached to the Northern Fleet.

Soviet Pacific Fleet units at sea southeast of the Kurils had been sunk, excepting a small number of submarines now being harried by ASW ships and aircraft. Here, too, Soviet submarines had been sunk in substantial numbers.

Soviet naval bases in both fleets had deliberately not yet been attacked. The Alliance's political leadership had judged that such a direct attack on the

Soviet homeland would be construed by the VGK as a deliberate escalatory step and would almost certainly provoke a nuclear response. Moreover, Nato's admirals had concluded that—irrespective of the Soviet response—such attacks could occasion heavy attrition on the attacking force and, considering that much of the Soviet Navy's assets was already on the bottom, were not worth the cost.

In sum, the naval bastions of the Soviet Union's two deployable fleets had been breached, and the USSR's maritime flanks were open to strikes from the sea.

After 30 days of war, the Soviet Black Sea Fleet was largely intact. It had suffered some minor losses to Turkish submarines and to Western air strikes against units near the Bosporus. To date, significant Western action had been limited to strikes against Rumanian and Bulgarian airfields that could bed-down Soviet aviation regiments targeted against Nato ships in the eastern Mediterranean.

The situation in the Baltic was similar to that in the Black Sea; Soviet combatant ship losses to German submarines were modest. It was clear, however, that a major push into the Jutland Peninsula was in the offing and that the offensive would include a substantial Warsaw Pact amphibious effort, through mined waters, against the Danish east coast. Should Jutland fall, the implications to southern Norway and possibly to Sweden's neutrality would be ominous. Equally ominous was evidence that Warsaw Pact second echelon forces—comprising some 60 divisions—would soon be committed in strength at key points along the line. The advance of these divisions appeared to have been unimpaired by intense US air strikes behind the front, in implementation of the doctrine which prescribed destruction of the Pact's second echelon, as a way of taking pressure off outnumbered Western forces in close combat.

For its part, the Pact had been largely unsuccessful in disrupting Allied ground defenses through the introduction of high-speed, well-armed "operational maneuver groups" deep into Western rear areas, where the VGK hoped they would eviscerate the relatively vulnerable logistics infrastructure of the West.

In short, Nato had survived the first month of the war substantially intact, although it had been thrown back in places from its forward defense lines by the weight of the Pact offensive. Remarkably, it now appeared possible that the war in Europe might develop into a conflict of maneuver and attrition like World War II, rather than the quick rush to Armageddon which had been forecast. (Unlike that earlier war, however, the industrial strength of the United States was no longer the largest factor in the attrition equation. Indeed, in the still-unscathed Russian homeland, Soviet industry was doing very well in the *only* thing it did well: military production. Soviet tank, aircraft, artillery, combatant ship, and munitions production vastly exceeded that of the United States, whose own economy—for a variety of reasons—would be for months incapable of high-speed, high-volume production of the means of war.) But it was not at all clear whether Nato's conventional strength was sufficient to sustain a conventional defense.

The question now was: could the Alliance hold fast on the ground, in the face of the impending offensive, once the Pact's second-echelon fronts

arrived on the line? The question for the Alliance's *naval* leadership and its political figures as well, was: could Nato's decisive advantage at sea be brought to bear on the Central Front? Could control of the sea be used to project power into western Europe, or was Nato condemned to be on the wrong side of a war of attrition which at some point could make a resort to tactical nuclear weapons inevitable? If the Allies could not translate victory at sea to power ashore, what were the implications for Nato if the Alliance no longer could sustain its Continental partners? What were the implications for the United States if it faced a world in which it had lost most of its air force and army in Europe, and the Warsaw Pact stood on the Channel ports across from Dover?

Children familiar with Aesop's fables recall the story of the fox and the crane, who invited each other to dinner. The fox served the meal on flat plates; the crane served from tall-necked jars. Neither guest got anything to eat but instead had to watch his host consume the meal. Their problem was one of configuration. Neither guest was configured to eat from his host's tableware, which condition the host used to best advantage. Does the world's premier power projection navy suffer from the same configuration problem, such that we are not able to project power into the one theater where in conventional, extended warfare it might matter most: the Central Front? Or is our problem less one of physical capacity than it is of mental agility? Are we simply unable to think of ways in which to use naval forces in Europe's heartland?

Setting aside special-purpose applications, such as the use of SEALs, there are three general ways to project naval power ashore.

Through the aircraft of a carrier air wing. While a host of factors combine to define precisely how much force can be exerted, in general the weight of the strikes is a function of the number of ships, air wing composition and distance to the target. To increase a wing's attack aircraft complement, sacrifices necessarily would have to be made elsewhere. Whether or not such trade-offs (e.g., a reduction in embarked ASW aircraft) could safely be made would be a function of the threat environment and other defensive resources (i.e., land-based patrol aircraft) that could be brought to bear.

By bombardment of the shore. Until the return of the *New Jersey* and *Iowa* to active service, the Navy's shore bombardment resources were almost vestigial. Even now the *New Jersey* and *Iowa* are as much symbols of this capacity as its reality. The introduction of land attack cruise missiles into the inventory raises the possibility of long-range, high-accuracy bombardment, but its practical application will have to await the further development of improved warheads and of a sound conventional, land attack cruise missile employment doctrine and supporting mapping.

In amphibious assault. Today's amphibious shipping can put ashore a balanced fighting force of 50,000 men, the assault echelon of one Marine Amphibious Force. While available amphibious lift is adequate to move only a portion of the Corps' wartime strength ashore, it is unlikely that we will need to land more than a MAF-sized force again. To ensure optimal capability, however, the Navy has begun a major improvement in amphibious lift capability toward achieving a goal of lifting a MAF and a MAB.

With these forces—taken together and combined with those of friendly armies and air forces—and in the light of other naval missions, can Nato's navies change the likely course of the land battle?

It is a general, and generally defensible, principle of naval warfare that *more* is better than *less*. This unremarkable insight has stimulated a remarkable amount of criticism, most recently cast in terms that a larger navy merely creates "a target-rich environment," directed at proving the counterintuitive notion that *less* is somehow superior to *more*. The real expert on this subject was General Custer, who is today famous for having died in a target-rich environment. (The price of confusing an opportunity to excel with imminent disaster has always been high!) Accepting, without complicated proof, the basketball coach's observation that a good big team will always beat a good little team, it is easy to see that naval contingency planning will always be a matter of allocating insufficient assets against competing theater claims. This allocation process compels some rank order of priorities, for we cannot do everything everywhere at once.

Whether or not we believe that war at sea will be global, and irrespective of what one thinks of swing strategies (or "The Swing Strategy"), for the foreseeable future we will have to fight sequentially at sea, in a sequence designed to commit our limited naval forces first in support of the most urgent and important campaigns, so that in each instance we have decisive strength available at the decisive point.

Our national military priorities would appear to be something like the following:

The defense of the United States. This is always first on everybody's short list of military missions, even though it is increasingly less clear how we can do this without success in western Europe and the western Pacific.

The defense of our Nato allies. Parenthetically, it may not be possible to defend our eastern Mediterranean allies and friends without some measnre of Israeli Air Force assistance. For this reason—to be able to operate in the eastern Mediterranean—and others, the defense of Israel becomes an implicit part of our general obligations on the Southern Flank, notwithstanding Allied fears that the United States is confusing its national and Nato objectives.

The defense of Japan and our other interests in the Far East.

The defense of Western (and Japanese) access to Middle East oil, an objective fundamentally different in character from the first two. In practical terms, this translates into defense of Saudi Arabia and the oil SLOCs.

Everything else.

Putting aside the first objective, arguably undoable by itself, it is possible to hear cogent arguments altering the order of the next three objectives, although many would agree that Europe's defense is second only in importance to our own. (Sometimes, strangely, it appears that we believe the defense of Europe to be more important than some Europeans do. It is regrettably easy to adopt this cynical view while scanning the defense budgets and public statements of some of our more prosperous allies.)

The case of oil access vs. Japan is an especially complex one, but the answer appears to hinge on the answers to two questions. First, is enough oil stockpiled in the West and Japan to support an enduring conventional defense, such that oil access can be a lower priority consideration? (If not, then we risk driving ourselves into an early resort to nuclear weapons—a strategic decision of overarching importance compelled by a failure of logistics.) Second, if the Soviets gained a military position controlling Middle East/southwest Asia POL reserves, would we later be able to eject them by force?

An inspection of US Navy deployments today seems to suggest that our naval forces have a wartime employment priority partially congruent with this listing of national military priorities. In America's closest (and most neglected, until recently) maritime theater, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea—from which, and through the Florida Straits, virtually all of the initial reinforcement and early logistic support for a war in Europe must flow—we have almost no naval forces permanently deployed. We are well postured on the southern of Nato's two maritime flanks but have given scant consideration to a naval role on the principal European front. We have great plans for Nato's northern maritime flank but only very modest forces there—partly a reflection of allied sensitivities and partly of force structure. We are reasonably well deployed in the western Pacific, and have a lesser presence in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, supported from tiny Diego Garcia, which is—sadly—in the wrong place to be especially useful in the important Persian Gulf/North Arabian Sea area. It is difficult to escape the thought that our deployments (and exercises) are equally the product of balancing the requirements of national and naval missions against the force structure (and what we know of our adversaries' intentions and capabilities) and the products of habit and recent history.

In the face of these shortages and this reality, to win—not just at sea but ashore too—we must be able to: (1) Rationalize our peacetime deployment modus operandi. (2) Move quickly from a peacetime deployment posture to

one of crisis containment and de-escalation. Should that fail, (3) act on strategic warning to reposition naval forces. Accomplish urgent wartime naval missions. And then, (4) contribute effectively to the land battles.

If we are nimble and nimble-witted, there is no reason why the Soviet surface navy cannot be destroyed at sea during the early weeks of a conventional war. If we then eschew the temptation to get distracted, it should be possible to swing our naval forces from where they were to engage the Soviet Navy to where they have to be to support more directly the land battle. (Coincidentally, considering the size of the tactical air forces facing one another across Europe, 3,000 Nato and 7,200 Warsaw Pact aircraft on D-day, and perhaps one-third that many 30 days later, the introduction of sea-based tactical aviation too soon in the conflict could result in the premature loss of these relatively scarce aircraft. By "premature" I mean that the loss would not be balanced by an offsetting military benefit. Putting naval aircraft into the Central Front battle some time after D+30—which is probably as soon as possible, if uniquely naval missions were to be accomplished first—could be done to greater advantage.)

Accepting that naval intervention in the land battle is desirable and I would argue that, without it, we cannot win a conventional war, can it be done? How?

One way is not to intervene at all but rather to substitute US naval power for some other kind, which can in turn then be sent forward. If, for example, American aircraft carriers operating from within the Irish Sea could participate in the air defense of the United Kingdom, then land-based RAF squadrons, which would otherwise be performing the home-defense mission, could become available to support the land battle on the Continent.

Another way would be to fly strikes from US and French carriers steaming in the North Sea and the Ligurian Sea against targets on accessible portions of the FEBA or to blunt a Pact ground offensive into northern Italy via the Po Valley. Naturally, this would be more effective if the air wing were attack-heavy.

Any decision to use naval aircraft as substitutes for those based ashore must be made after careful consideration, because each tailhook-equipped aircraft is more than a number of potential sorties; it represents roughly one percent of the military capability of the carrier itself, an investment of people and dollars that dwarfs the cost of corresponding shore-based aircraft and facilities.

The aircraft carrier with her embarked air wing and afloat escorts, is the best general-purpose response our nation has to overseas crises which have a military dimension. Seen in this light, our requirement for *carrier battle groups* is driven substantially by our peacetime crisis control needs. The present objective force level is 15; obviously, more would permit either a faster

response, a more substantial one, or a response in more places at the same time at today's tempo of operations.

In the event of general conventional war, the number of available CVBGs is obviously important. Less obviously important is the number of aircraft embarked and the availability of attrition replacements; but I would argue that, in general war, aircraft are in some ways more important than the parent ships. High aircraft attrition can quickly reduce our carriers to relative impotence. To avoid a situation whereby a loss of an important fraction of the air wing would permanently degrade the combat potential of the CVBG, we need to ensure that we are prepared for substantial aircraft attrition.

The thesis being argued here is that we need significant numbers of aircraft carriers for crisis management in peacetime and that our enduring and substantial peacetime needs for presence and power projection are inadequately reflected in our CV inventory. In wartime, we need more than one air wing per aircraft carrier to ensure continued capability in the face of a high threat to the air wing, such as would obtain on the Central Front.

A third naval contribution to the land battle is through amphibious assault at some decisive point. Geography, naturally, limits where amphibious forces can be brought to bear. Happily, putting Marines ashore on Jutland is not only possible but also strategically wise. Ensuring Nato control of Schleswig-Holstein and Jutland—something the Danes and West Germans must view as vital—would:

Protect southern Norway and Sweden. Certainly populous southern Norway deserves as much attention as the strategically important, but largely vacant, north if for no other reason than that we cannot hold the North Cape area should southern Norway fall. With respect to Sweden: as armed neutrals defending their national territory, the Swedes perform an important, albeit coincidental, service for the Alliance. There is no contradiction in Nato's taking of measures which have as one effect preserving the ability of the Swedes to defend themselves.

Control access to the Baltic Sea. Our traditional objective in the Baltic has been to ensure that the Soviet Baltic Fleet, supported by Pact allies, could not sortie through the Kattegat and the Skagerrak and join its northern counterpart in depredations in Atlantic shipping lanes. The Soviets may not be interested in this at all; if not, we should not deny ourselves the possibility—and benefits—of Nato offensive operations on the Baltic southern littoral, impossible without firm control of the Danish peninsula. These operations raise interesting questions about Pact, especially Polish and East German, solidarity.

Anchor the immediate seaward flank of the Alliance's forward defense, the bedrock of Nato's agreed strategy. Ideally, US Marines should get to Jutland in some force before D-day, when administrative delivery—instead of the much more challenging amphibious assault—would be possible. Such a timely arrival

depends heavily on adequate strategic warning of a Soviet move west (which we probably can expect to receive) and quick political decision-making to permit the movement of forces designed to deter that same invasion. This latter event is much less certain than the former, when one considers the elephantine decision-making process to which the Alliance has bound itself.

As to the feasibility of an amphibious landing on western Jutland: if a preemptive administrative landing were not made, most judgments are probably too pessimistic.

An alternative for Marine Corps employment, this one in the Southern Region, would be as a strategic reserve held afloat and on the island of Sicily. There the Marines could be committed to either the eastern Mediterranean (Thrace) or the central Med (perhaps the Po Valley), when it became clear which choice represented wise employment. Until such a decision had been reached, Marines ashore on Sicily could defend that island—a vital part of our logistics infrastructure in that theater—and Marine air could fly throughout the central Mediterranean, and over much of coastal north Africa, to ensure open SLOCs to our Nato and Middle East friends and allies.

Distilled to its essence, what emerges from the foregoing is:

- Nato's conventional defenses, at sea and ashore, might well be fully sufficient to result in a long war of maneuver and attrition. Such a war is made more possible because both sides understand well the costs of nuclear war and have developed political and military instruments and procedures of restraint to a high level.
- Parodoxically, while Nato can thus "force" a long conventional war, its land and air forces probably cannot win one, and the Alliance (and its individual partners) have not well considered—in any sort of rigorous way—how its substantial naval advantage can be brought to bear on the land battle.
- There are European battlefields where naval forces can be brought to bear with significant effect, if the time of commitment and type of forces are selected wisely. Norway, Denmark, Italy, Greece and parts of Germany and Turkey are examples of European partners where naval forces could be decisive in supporting land battles under certain scenarios.
- Our naval power projection force needs to be examined in light of a possible substantial role in support of the land battle for Nato Europe. Such an examination may reveal additional procurement requirements; it may simply show the need for more carefully considered and articulated tactical employment doctrine.