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We have created the enemy we would like to have, a Soviet Union thirsting for power that it did not intend to use, armed but not anxious to maintain a harmonious world, monotonously boasting about its terrible victories and losses but gratefully learning from our sophisticated negotiators about the nature of modern war.

We have of the universe only formless, fragmentary visions, which we complete by the association of arbitrary ideas, creative of dangerous suggestions.

Marcel Proust

ON CREATING AN ENEMY

by

Robert B. Bathurst

If war is too serious to be left to the generals, it is still not obvious to whom it can be left, especially when one is addressing the problem of conflict with the Soviet Union. Since U.S. recognition of the U.S.S.R. in 1934, giving us direct diplomatic observation and access, the misperception of Soviet intentions and capabilities has been so vast on so many occasions by so many of us as to call into question our whole baggage of analysis. We academics, militarists, and diplomats alike may refer scornfully to President Roosevelt's second Ambassador to the Kremlin, Joseph E. Davies (a brilliant trial lawyer, adviser to four Presidents and winner of one of the age's richest heiresses), who pronounced Stalin's show trials in 1937 genuine, but, on the other hand, few of us have reliably escaped falling prey to a Soviet Union of our own creation, either

In view of our dismal record of predicting Soviet behavior—and apparently their equally poor one of predicting ours—it is odd that we spend so little thought trying to analyze the cultural and professional patterns of our misconceptions. When one realizes the degree to which our preconceptions dominate tactics, readiness, ship design, war scenarios—in short, our capability to perceive and prepare for danger on the most fundamental level—it becomes alarming that we have so little insight into the origin of our ideas about war.

This piece attempts to begin a discussion of our anthropology of war. It proposes to identify some of the recurring patterns of the way in which we perceive the Russians and their threat and to show how we translate that into specific ideas, weapons, and battle scenarios. It is only a sketch of a

vast subject, and one that invites a dialogue with the reader.

The Pattern of Alarm. Undoubtedly the orchestrated paucity of information, the Potemkin civilization and the conspiratorial, cabalistic behavior of the Politburo all contribute to the ease with which we Americanize the Bolsheviks. That we do not know what or how decisions are made in the Soviet Union seems to stimulate uncontrolled nationalization. Gorshkov is mistaken for Zumwalt; the Politburo conveniently divides into the good guys and bad guys; fictive elites behave like young Rotarians; and Soviet war plans suspiciously resemble our own.¹ These are the shortcuts we take through the lack of information in order to create the rational actor model of our imaginations, a model who inevitably becomes an American look-alike.

When Franklin Roosevelt concluded that Stalin was a basically good but insecure man, the United States had had only 10 years or so of close diplomatic observation of the Bolshevik leaders' proclivity for the slaughter of their own people. When General Haig permitted himself to express surprise that subversion, sabotage and terror were Leninist principles and practices, he could rely upon nearly 50 years of diplomatic observation. Surely Brezhnev had a right to be indignant that 64 years after the October Revolution, America understood so little about the contest that consumed so much of its intellectual and material energy.

The history of American invention of the Soviets now, after so many years, already describes a somewhat symmetrical pattern of rising and falling alarms, of sprint and drift. Decade after decade, many preconceptions repeat themselves.

For example, there was Roosevelt's formula for winning Stalin's confidence and cooperation. He apparently reduced the entire Soviet problem, and with it

the lives of many quiet people, to one mistaken idea: that Stalin would be quite decent if only he were loved. In a formula that one cannot read even half a century later without gasping, Roosevelt revealed a preconception that probably cost millions their lives and freedom. Arguing with his sometime Ambassador to the Soviet Union, William Bullitt, who wanted to take a hard line, he said:

Bill, I don't dispute your facts, they are accurate. I don't dispute the logic of your reasoning. I just have a hunch that Stalin is not that kind of a man. Harry Hopkins [Roosevelt's wartime emissary to Stalin] says he's not and that he doesn't want anything but security for his country, and I think that if I give him everything I possibly can and ask nothing from him in return, *noblesse oblige*, he won't try to annex anything and will work with me for a world of democracy and peace.²

Immediately after the war that the United States, its home front intact, its empire loyal and well-fed, ended with greater power than any nation had accumulated in all of human history, many decisions were made in fear of the massive Red Legions that could sweep across Europe. This was not only a strategic misrepresentation but also a historic fear. Europe had long looked upon Imperial Russia as an industrial weakling but an inexhaustible source of manpower (somewhat the way China is viewed today). The Germans had such fears in two wars. The British and the French incorrectly counted on that insecurity to keep the Prussian juggernaut cautious and contained. The fear was that the countless hordes would surge out of the steppes to ravage Europe. After the war, at the time that these fears were greatest, those Soviet troops that had survived the war and were not being reeducated in Siberian prison camps were apparently too weak

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from hunger (even in the Ukraine, according to ex-Premier Khrushchev, the peasants were eating their own children) to reach the Fulda Gap. Speaking of that period, Professor Ulam wrote:

The Soviet ability to conjure up millions of troops for an offensive war beguiled Western statesmen, yet the fact is that at the end of World War II the total number of men under arms in the U.S. forces surpassed that of the Soviet Union.³

By 1950 our fears rose to a new crescendo, this time focusing on the bomber. Known as the "Bomber Gap," this nightmare had the same ring of inventive anxiety that we hear today. The famous NSC-68 of that year, issued by the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department, predicted that by 1954 the Soviet Union would possess the military capability of delivering a surprise atomic attack requiring the United States to have "greatly increased general air, ground and sea strength and increased air defense and civilian defense programs to provide reasonable assurance that the free world could survive an initial surprise atomic attack . . . and go on to the eventual attainment of its objectives."⁴

In the 1950 JCS estimate, it was predicted that the Soviet Union could "overrun Western Europe, drive toward the oil lands of the Near and Middle East, and attack Western SLOC's." In a Blue Ribbon committee report to the Secretary of the Army, there was an equally alarming estimate: "The danger that Russia will overrun Western Europe is the greatest present threat to civilization. The means to stop it do not now exist."⁵

The downing of the U-2 in May 1960 seems to have distracted the nation's attention from bombers. That is what Khrushchev meant it to do when he claimed that bomber attacks against the Soviet Union were doomed to failure

and he reminded the world that bombers were "obsolete" and that the Soviet Union could obliterate any countries that might dare to attack it, including America.⁶

His missile rattling, one of the standard methods, as we learned, of his diplomacy, the launch of the first *Sputnik*, the first Soviet ICBM test shot in 1957 (and possibly, too, the return of what appeared to be a recurring 10-year cyclical attack of nerves) contributed to the creation of the "Missile Gap." (It is presumed by many to have helped John Kennedy to gain that half percent that won him the election on the promise that he would get "the country moving again.") In 1963 Khrushchev, whose exaggerations were endemic, cited, for the first time, a specific number of missiles and that was only 80 to 120, a figure so small that it gave the lie to his previous boasts about being able to obliterate the West.

The war in Vietnam and the success in the SALT I negotiations (a success somewhat in the Roosevelt style, granting the Soviets an astonishing 55 percent superiority in launchers) seem to have weakened the cyclical signals around 1970, although the rise of the Soviet Navy was beginning to create its own kind of gap. ("The balance of maritime power is shifting in the Mediterranean," wrote Capt. Giles Upshur, Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence on our Navy staff in London.) But by 1979 the patient was responding normally. Team "B" had been created to assure us that we had underestimated the danger, and it performed that task in the style of the many teams, panels and committees that had preceded it. (One, sponsored by the Rockefellers, had boosted Henry Kissinger into his strategic arena.) But as the historical record certainly shows, we did not so much underestimate the military threat as simply not to understand it.

The invasion of Afghanistan occurred in the right year to be noticed. Had it

occurred sooner, there might have been the mildest sort of protest from the United States. How else can one explain our curiously vague initial response to the operations in Angola, Ethiopia or South Yemen, areas of far greater strategic importance, where Soviet officers have succeeded in commanding, or at least coordinating, multilingual, multinational and multiracial forces? That is an impressive capability for a nation that proposes to rule abroad in such a Warsaw Pact-like manner.

What we created in that decade was, of course, the enemy that we would like to have: a Soviet Union thirsting for power that it did not intend to use; one angrily armed but anxious to maintain a harmonious world; one monotonously boasting about its terrible victories and losses but gratefully learning from our sophisticated negotiators about the nature of modern war.

The Soviet Mirror. What are some of the corresponding Soviet creations? Surely the main one was, and remains, that Soviet leaders see fantastic dangers everywhere. Many are real ones. With enemies all around them, unable to trust their own people or each other, facing an often hysterical West, with allies who turned into enemies, unfaithful clients, and secure friends nowhere, they could hardly recognize that orderly historical progress that scientific socialism had led them to expect. For them, it is a dangerous world that only a schizophrenic could argue was developing according to Marxist laws.

Between the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922 in which Soviet Russia and pre-Nazi Germany agreed to close and controlled military cooperation and mutual assistance until the bloody German attack of 22 June 1941 was only 14 years. Pledges of eternal friendship and unshakable brotherhood between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China sworn in 1949 were shattered together with the skulls of 21

Soviet soldiers killed on the Manchurian border only 12 years later in 1961. While the West thought that it was watching a red monolith in Eastern Europe, the Soviets were organizing for the control of the historically anti-Russian Poles, the coldly disdainful Germans and the unreliable Czechs. Even the impoverished Albanians dared to steal their submarines and show them the door. (While Brezhnev may essay to protect the gains of socialism as much as he wishes, he keeps discovering that one man's protection is another man's colonialism.) Nowhere the Soviets looked did they see dependable allies; nowhere (except in Bulgaria where a major export is the nectar of roses) was there that fraternal proletarian love that was the rock on which socialist internationalism was founded.

The Soviets knew all along that they were living on the future as well as the past battleground, and it frustrated them that the United States, with its seemingly endless abstractions and logical deductions about strategic conflict, did not really understand what war was. Certainly, in 5 to 10 years between the design of a new ship and its launching, democracies could fall, dictators rise, pacts be broken and allies could mobilize. In such circumstances, surrounded by ancient enemies in the most populous countries in the world, few of which had much interest in the American idea of stability, how much was enough?

It is a clue to the Soviet creation that the government functions from the inside of a medieval fortress, the only government in the world to do so, except for that of the Grand Prince of Lichtenstein. And beyond the Kremlin walls there are the rings of security guards for the body and censors for the mind. Then the barbed wire and guard ships, and beyond that, a hostile world. What limit is there to the enemies to be invented? You plug the Czech gap and the Afghan gap and then you become

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more aware of those that remain: Turkey, Iran, Japan. And you keep moving your defense perimeter outward with *Kashins*, then with *Krivaks* and *Karas* and *Kirovs*.

The America that the Soviets created, it is safe to say, is scientifically and historically obliged to use power as it was understood in the old imperial days. War was, after all, an accepted way to expand trade, legitimize nations, alter boundaries, confirm superiority and secure a lasting peace. How peculiar our reactions have seemed to Soviet moves in Eastern Europe, Iran, Greece, Korea and Afghanistan, areas of legitimate Soviet and Russian interest of long standing. Why did we assume, the Soviets must have wondered, that a nation would achieve great power and not use it?

It is not, after all, so surprising that America has trouble grasping the essence of the Soviet Union, for ever since 1917 it has been busy creating and projecting an image of itself. There is a world reflected nor in any ordinary mirror but in a tripaneled haberdasher's mirror, image reflecting image to the limit of the eye's patience. And it is an image that by no means sprang ready-formed from the head of Lenin, however much his political descendants—the philosophical ones have long since been purged—would like us to think so. While most nations and societies build their models on some real or imagined qualities within themselves—German efficiency; French intellect; Japanese cohesion; American flexibility—the Soviets have built theirs on models cruelly external to the Russian nature, and to the some hundred nationalities within the Soviet empire. For 64 years Soviet leaders have been manipulating a metaimage, composed of their noblest dreams for mankind: equality of town and country, unisexual classlessness, full employment, reliable food supplies. (When Khrushchev promised communism by 1980, the most glowing

description he could give was that the bus rides would be free.) But these goals remain almost as remote as they were 60 years ago.

From Lenin's 1918 order to shoot without trial prostitutes and women who distracted the soldiers (Slavic Marxists have generally treated the sexual urge as if it were a capitalist invention for lowering labor and military productivity), followed by Stalin's slaughter of the kulaks and the enslavement of the peasants, the incarceration of the whole population behind the fences, to the expulsion of the Jews and the silencing of the poets, the Soviet leaders have written a black antihistory of their frustration and anger at the refusal of their bewildered subjects to get into the mirror that, when they held it up to nature, did not (as they wanted), reflect an Olympic gold medalist, but only that same suffering population we met in Turgenyev and Tolstoy. For that reason the hero-soldier has necessarily replaced the increasingly besotted worker as the model of Soviet achievement.

With so little success in understanding their own subjected population, there has been little hope that Soviet leaders would understand us, their capitalist class enemies, any better. With far fewer opinions to distract them from the main line of Marxist thought, Soviets cannot be expected to arrive spontaneously at the conclusion that America is not a threat, any more than we can expect a sudden shift in our military estimates to the position that the Russians are not coming. The late Marshal Grechko's assessment had the force of a catechism that undoubtedly serves as the formula for Soviet assessments still:

The weakening of positions of imperialism and the doom of the capitalist system intensify the aggressiveness and adventurism of reactionary monopolistic circles. Here and there they provoke

military conflicts aimed with a cutting edge against the Soviet Union, the entire socialist community and the forces of national liberation. By means of political subversion, blackmail and aggressive wars, the militarists vainly try to overcome the insoluble internal social, economic, and ideological contradictions of the capitalist system, to weaken the world socialist system, and deal with the international working people's and national liberation movement.⁷

The Horn of Gabriel. If, as they seem to be, many such delusions and oversimplifications of the 20th century are by now part of the historical record, then where do we look to escape the mirror? Where is the reality that is the corrective of our fragmentary visions? Do we find it in the systems approaches, expert testimony, or study of history?

Apparently not. There is no reason to believe that we are not just as capable of strategic self-delusion as were the French at their Maginot Line or the Japanese at Pearl Harbor. For example, we assure ourselves that with modern electronic devices we can depend upon strategic warning, apparently forgetting our surprise and ignorance that Prague was seized and the Sinai invaded in spite of massive electronic surveillance. Nor, in this dark age, do the political analysts seem to do better. The Shah fell, Afghanistan was invaded, the Polish workers rose and the peasants unionized without benefit of political prediction.

In the 36 years since the end of World War II, the U.S. Navy has not faced a serious adversary in battle. That is a historical precondition for the growth of institutional illusions. We should be cautious. Based upon historical precedent, our admirals must surely be asking themselves if they are preparing to fight the last war instead of the next one. They can, as a point of reference, analyze what can justifiably be called the first

modern naval battle. It took place on the night of 6 October 1973, at the very beginning of the Yom Kippur War, on the Day of Atonement.

This was the kind of battle that the Soviets had predicted in the doctrinal discussions eventually revealed in the textbook, *Soviet Military Strategy*, in 1962.⁸ It was argued that command and control particularly would be especially complex and critical; the weapons would be missiles and rockets; surprise, more than maneuver, would play the primary role; the battles would be sudden and possibly isolated, not dependent upon a massing of forces. The Battle of the Styx (it deserves a classical name) was in every sense this new kind of naval war, and one that would have been similar if the weapons had been nuclear.

The naval battle was a Soviet model. It was fought to protect the flanks of the invading army and to achieve sea control in a limited area. The Egyptian and Syrian Navies could choose to do battle on their own initiative, surprising the enemy with superior mass. And finally it was, in Soviet terms, a "just" war, if one chooses one of the theoretical formulations that would sound suitably exalted such as a fight for liberation of a nation emerging from colonialism against the reactionary forces of international capitalism.

Finally, the *Styx* missile, carried by either *Osa* or *Komar* fast patrol boats in the Syrian and Egyptian Navies, was presumably the superior weapon against its probable opponent, the *Gabriel* on the Israeli-designed *Saar*-class boats. With a 10 nautical mile advantage, the Arab Navies would have the Israeli forces at their mercy for at least 5 minutes before they could come into position to fire, and that would be at the very edge of their maximum range. Everything seemed set in the Arab's favor. The battle would be, the Soviets must have thought, one of those events predicted by Marxist historians: a progressive product of a proletarian

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society defeating the regressive forces of a decaying social system.

The Egyptians must have chosen battle with great confidence. The *Styx* had already proved its worth in the first sinking of a ship by a cruise missile, the Israeli *Elatb* in 1967. There was no battle between missiles then. *Elatb* was impudently exposing itself off the Egyptian coast, depending for its safety on the overall deterrence of Israeli forces. Still there had been a shock to the psychological balance, as well. The missile had been fired, not by sophisticated Russian advisers, as the naval establishments would have preferred, but by emerging naval sailors. Naval tacticians of all nations had cause to return to their maneuvering boards. If any minimally educated crew could handle the intricacies of missile warfare well enough to win a round against one of the world's best trained, then what areas of the sea did major navies securely control?

If the memory of the sinking of *Elatb* was not enough to strike some dread into the hearts of the *Saar* boat crews on their way out to do battle that night, then they had only to think of the deadly accuracy and damage caused by the same *Styx* in the hands of the Indian Navy only a year and a half before in the second Indo-Pakistani war. That was an attack, not a battle, for the Pakistanis had nothing with which to defend themselves except aircraft, and they were, as were the Israeli fighters that night, busy with their own problems ashore. The Indians had shown that the missile could be used to bombard the shore as well as to sink ships. What must have been even more disturbing was the knowledge that nearly all of the missiles fired had found a target. Only one of the four hit empty water where the *Elatb* had already sunk.

But this time, in spite of that experience and in the apparent absence of the usual problems associated with Soviet equipment—spare parts and

reliability—not one of the some 50 incalculably expensive *Styx* missiles hit its mark; whereas, the Israeli *Gabriel*, with a greatly inferior range, managed to sink much of the offensive arm of both the Egyptian and Syrian Navies and surely the morale of the officers and men as well. They sat out the rest of the war in port while the Israelis occasionally lobbed missiles over the breakwater. What had happened to the "queen of battle" as the old Stalinist Chief of Staff, General Shtemenko, called the new missile and rocket forces?

When asked to explain the basic tactic in a seminar at the U.S. Naval War College, one of the Israeli Squadron Commanders, who had taken a 3-week leave of absence from his course in tactics in order to sink an important part of the Syrian Navy, explained laconically, "The system works. We practiced it and it came off as we expected it to." Perhaps he should have been teaching his instructors.

There were three basic maneuvers, none revealed by that captain, but inferred from other accounts.⁹ The *Saar* boats had to close the distance of 10 miles during which they were exposed to the *Styx*. The Egyptians and Syrians, when they were aware that the Israelis were coming, often fired anxiously at the limit of the range of the *Styx* allowing its flight to be subject to maximum interference before it found its target. The Israeli tactic was to make maximum use of that distance for their countermeasures, countermeasures that required the steadiest of nerves in the face of maximum, at least for the first round, danger.

The Israelis had chosen the design of the *Saar* boats with many objectives in mind. They had the luxury of knowing the undoubted scenario in advance. The problem of the *Styx* was foremost. The Israelis traded an inferior range for speed, maneuverability and, most important, for the least possible radar profile. With considerable *sang froid*, they had

to head straight into danger, counting to the split second when to release their electronic decoys. They had to know exactly when the *Styx* were fired, their speed, and which evasive maneuver to take until they were within range to fire their own *Gabriel*. At that point, the third maneuver would take place: the firing of the *Gabriel* and then a fast turn out of range, and to safety.

To succeed in this engagement, it was necessary for the Israelis to have practiced it, secretly, until their crews could execute it with the precision of a ballet dancer. They had to know, through advance intelligence, to distinguish from all of the sounds of the cosmos that one distant "click" that must have signaled a rush of blood to their heads as well as the roar of the igniting *Styx* engines. Seldom before had sailors had to perform with such precision, controlled not by flaghoists or relayed commands, but by a deadly fugue of abstract electronic commands.

Soviet teachers filled their own newspapers and journals with demands for the highest levels of readiness, for over-fulfilling training schedules, for knowing the enemy. It is unlikely that they would not have conveyed these axioms to their Arab students or that their intelligence would not have supplied the essential details of the *Gabriel's* flight. Why did their counter-measures fail? Why of all of their maneuvers was none successful, even in the slightest degree?

History is nearly always written by the victors. The defeated seldom tell their story, or perhaps it is that they are seldom heard. We must speculate why, with a weapon superior in range and a platform also fast and maneuverable, in engagements that they chose, the Egyptians and Syrians suffered such ignominious losses without a single hit.

The Mental Electronics of Battle.

Among the possibilities, there is one that is almost certain to be true. It has

nothing to do with electronics, and little to do with technology, but everything to do with the creative mind. The Egyptians and the Syrians, and possibly even the Soviets, had obviously not foreseen, when they steamed out intending to sink the Israeli Navy, that any maneuvers would be necessary. With a proven missile having an advantage of 10 nautical miles, they did not expect to face a tactical problem. Such is the danger of superiority. We can imagine that their communications security was poor—what was there to hide?—their morale was high and their preparations were perfunctory. They would have had the confidence of a superior force. That can stultify the mind, as history and sport have so often shown. Inferiority seems to lead to either paralysis or the most daring initiative.

We should not be surprised that the Soviets did not reveal what lessons they learned in the Yom Kippur War. In that land of heroes and endless triumphs, it would be an act of disloyalty to notice that their *Styx* missile cost two allies their navies. We have, however, the right to speculate about what it meant to their theories of war.

That the *Styx* in Arab hands performed disastrously was only a footnote to what was happening on the main battlefield. After initial successes, much Soviet equipment performed badly. It was apparent that Soviet military doctrine and technology needed major adjustments, as did our own.¹⁰

The way in which the two nations understood that task would, of course, be characteristic of their mental sets. Just as there is a national way of building ships, as Capt. James Kehoe has so conclusively shown, so there is a national way of thinking about war.¹¹

In the United States, for example, we think about war very much in the present. We are concerned with solving today's problems, not tomorrow's, and we pay little attention to the lessons of the past, to Vietnam or Yom Kippur,

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for example. The Soviets, on the other hand, focus on future wars and past victories. Unlike us, they do not compulsively dwell on the problems of the present.

There are, of course, many other cultural differences in the way we think about war, but two are especially important. In the United States, we pay little attention to abstract theories of war. The abstract arguments about nuclear deterrent strategy, largely the creation of academics, were basically ignored in the Navy and greeted with confusion in the Army. Moreover, our armed forces have had to operate without a national strategy or a unified doctrine. The Soviets, however, have both and, indeed, would find it nearly impossible to function without abstract and comprehensive concepts.

There are also cultural and historical differences with respect to technology. In the United States, we tend to expect a technical, instead of a tactical, solution for each new problem. The Soviet assumption, based on their own and the imperial Russian experience, is that they will be using inferior equipment. It is therefore necessary to take measures that will equalize the difference between themselves and the enemy, measures that emphasize innovative tactics and psychological warfare—deception, craft, guile—measures that compensate for deficient equipment.

The Soviets, and before them their Imperial Russian forebears, having been long in the inferior position, have shown themselves very adept at innovations, though they have not always led to success in battle. They were the first to put a cruise missile to sea on a fast patrol boat—missiles have no recoil and thus can be put on small platforms—making the Battle of the Styx possible, and introducing fundamental changes in the tactics of naval warfare. The innovations did not stop there. The Soviet Navy also mourned the missiles on submarines and other platforms,

starting a line of development that led, ultimately, to the remarkable battle cruiser, *Kirov*.

The United States could, of course, have developed as potent a force of naval rockers and missiles. Like the Soviets, our missile program was greatly stimulated by the captured German V-1 rocket, called the *Loon* in its American version, and by the experience of cooperative German scientists. (In 1947, a German V-2 rocket was fired from the deck of the carrier *Midway*.) The *Loon* led to the *Regulus* which was to have a range of 1,000 miles and a speed of Mach 2. Perhaps because it was the descendant of the V-1, the *Regulus* was never thought of as a tactical cruise missile, but only as a strategic weapon. During the period of its development, 1955-1965, our attention was so focused on strategic nuclear weapons that we overlooked the practical value of naval cruise missiles and the *Regulus* was dropped.

As one commentator remarked about the *Regulus*, "If the weapon had been considered to be a replacement for the 11" gun rather than an aircraft, its possibilities might have been more easily perceived."¹²

Escaping the Mirror. Armies are temples of ancestor worship, said Basil Liddell Hart in an attempt to explain that kind of behavior. But ancestor worship is not always self-destructive. There is nothing unique about the military's sharing a penchant with its nation for basing its conceptions on powerful recent experiences. For example, not only the Soviet military leaders but also the entire Soviet people were traumatized by the German *blitzkrieg* of 22 June 1941. Even if their reason tells them that there will not be another war like it, their fears force them to be always preparing for one. But the Politburo did show itself to be both wise and original by convening a conference after Stalin's death in the late fifties

on the nature of future wars with the idea of avoiding refighting the battles of the past. (It is very likely that some of the success of this undertaking was owed to the browbeating of Khrushchev who saw with a canny peasant's eye that you do not need a battleship to shoot off a missile.)

The result of these deliberations—and not without controversy and dissent—was that rockets and missiles, nuclear and conventional, came to the fore and large ships and bombers, as well as the sainted artillery, receded, at least for a quarter century. The new tactics called for protective clothing (even when there was not enough except for the pictures in *Red Star*), dispersed formations in order to evade nuclear blasts, complex new command procedures to insure the control of remote units, and innovations in communications to survive the new conditions. Immediately the ships, while not the paragons of naval art that the Soviets claimed, began to reflect the new concepts of warfare.

For example, the *Osa* was probably as characteristic of the Soviet view of surface naval warfare as the aircraft carrier was for the United States. Launched in 1961, it was the embodiment of the latest missile technology. It also supported the strategy that was to become the Brezhnev doctrine in which military power was to play some of the centralizing role in international socialism of the old Comintern and Cominform. It could operate in shallow seas on the flanks of the army; it could navigate the open ocean to take station at maritime chokepoints. While it was not designed to patrol coastal waters in a war of liberation, it was, nevertheless, a boat that appealed to developing navies because it gave them a great advantage over their neighbors, as its wide distribution from China to Morocco and Cuba would testify.

While the *Osa* could not challenge an aircraft carrier, it still could capture the

imagination. Together with its more primitive *Komar* forebear, it changed naval warfare. At least it changed the calculations of naval power. The fire-power of navies was no longer indicated by their deadweight tons. When its missiles would carry nuclear warheads, the little *Osa* could certainly challenge a carrier in an inland sea. Its very presence in the operating area of a navy that, like ours, assumed its enemies were benign would cause a shift of attention from the strategic to the tactical problems of small, modern navies in territorial waters, the growing naval problem of the decade.

Until the Yom Kippur War, appealing to African and Asian navies was easy for the Soviet Union. The naval problems of those nations were not unlike those of the superpower. They needed to defend their coastal zones with ships that could be manned by crews that could be elevated from boot camp through all of the stages of civilization from tribal to electronic. Admiral Gorshkov's reputed motto—excellent is the enemy of good enough—was good for them also. For them also, war was the central concern of existence. Nothing could be taken for granted, neither superiority in weapons technology nor numbers nor even the dependability of the rear.

That the U.S. Navy did not have an answer to the cruise missile before the end of that decade, an era that its only likely adversary had declared as one of rockets and missiles, is an example of the power of national preconceptions. Far from being museums of the past, the naval leaders were simply embodying the national view of war, one that did not recognize the possibility of that kind of battle, one that assumed the only kind of war would be a nuclear one, without a victory. An enemy was invented whose strategy and tactics made that possible. We had to ignore much of his doctrine on war and revolution for our carrier groups to sail in a Mediterranean

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reeming with 150 *Styx* launchers, not having an effective way to stop them.

Those were years in which the United States had, ironically, assumed the roles of the 19th-century Russian tsars, Alexander I and Nicholas I, those emperors dedicated to maintaining the princes of Europe in undiminished power. Our Navy's job was not to win any victory—but we had no concept of victory—but to be ready to prevent anyone else's, should that be required. To do that, we assumed a world seeking stability and a Navy to police it. That did not give our naval leaders much cause or inspiration to create tactics. Not required to design war-winning strategies, they were asked only to stand by in case of need. Because that could be anywhere, the Navy was forced to dissipate its energies thinking of all possible scenarios that would fit the national preconceptions. In the meantime, the Soviets were thinking of different kinds of war.

Uncreating the Enemy. Lenin and Engels had emphasized that military might was an economic test of the industrial power of the state. (Stalin, Mao and Ho Chi-Min argued, and seemed to prove it, that war was first of all a test of the morale of the rear.) If Lenin and Engels were correct, then the Yom Kippur War tended to show that the socialist bloc, unless it could solve the problems of production, quality control, as well as technological innovation, was probably in an unequal race. Common to all observers was astonishment at the enormous rate of attrition suffered by all participants, not just at sea but also ashore. In less than 3 weeks, equipment was being expended much faster than in any comparable period in history. Some 3,000 tanks were lost, about one third of the number then in NATO. The socialist economies have not shown themselves capable of keeping up in such a race.

And where was the end to it if much

of the wealth of the Urals could be destroyed on the sands of the Sinai or sunk on the crest of the Nile with the battle far from decided? If the road to London led through Delhi, as Lenin said, referring to his strategy for cutting the industrial nations off from their raw materials, then it was suddenly going to do so at an astronomical price. It would mean that Soviet predictions of the decay of the West would sound more and more like mirror-imaging as peasants continued to waste their energies in the grim privations of rural serfdom while the proletariat sank deeper and deeper into boredom and drink. In the long run, the Soviet leaders might find, as so many conquerors had before them, that they had dissipated their strength in their farflung outposts while decay set in at home. They had failed to create the world that Marx intended.

For the Soviet Navy, the war must have created a dilemma. The doctrine that had dictated small ships with short ranges and little support for either crews or weapons applied only to adjacent waters. For the rate at which weapons were used up in the Yom Kippur War, for the widely dispersed formations in which modern navies had to operate because of the great accuracy of rockets and missiles, and for their scouring and probing in the scattered socialist empire and the troubled waters of imperialism, the Soviet Navy had to begin building bigger ships. That, too, caused a problem. The Yom Kippur War had certainly confirmed the vulnerability of large electronic targets.

None of this was particularly comfortable for Soviet power. Such a technically advanced navy, operating far from Leningrad and Vladivostok, outside the fences and patrols, could hardly be manned by reluctant draftees from the primitive *kolkhozes* on the steppes. Furthermore, sailing in dispersed patterns put a strain on communications

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in wartime and loyalties in peacetime. Opportunities for defection would necessarily increase. The Soviets would insist on sailing their ships, in the Noah formation, two by two, but that would enlarge the target. With the longer missile ranges and consequent looser ship formations would have to come a loosening of command and control, as the Soviets well knew. (That had been one of the first lessons of the Great War of the Fatherland. Moscow could not find out what was happening at the front.) But loosening military control comes even harder than loosening economic control, and Moscow has been unable to do that.

Long ago the Soviets understood that the conditions of modern war make for a very complex command and control problem demanding much greater authority for the local commander than Moscow has ever been willing to grant. Only recently did the U.S. Navy become aware that it faced the same problem. The future wars that the Soviets thought they had to prepare for were ones in which the victor would be he who could switch with maximum speed from conventional to nuclear weapons. And they understood that in order to do so successfully, one had to have not only the choice of weapons in place but also the doctrine of when and how to use them.

The Yom Kippur War seemed to confirm that prediction. Certainly, the time could not be far off when the local commander's estimate would have to include provisions for a switch to nuclear weapons. But in other respects, the war did not confirm Soviet doctrine. Surprise did not win victories; concentration of force presented an easier target to be destroyed; rapid movement in the main direction could only be accomplished with astonishing losses;

although in many ways a proxy war, it did not lead to escalation and finally, because of the huge losses, the exhaustion of war materiel, it did appear that the FEBA, the forward edge of battle, could become stabilized and distinct. But whatever they learned, the Soviets did not appear to modify their obsessive image of the *blitzkrieg* war launched by American imperialists. That has apparently remained the given of Soviet estimates.

The U.S. Navy, on the other hand, certainly realized that it had to accelerate its antimissile programs, but beyond the technical level, it is not apparent that the battle had any doctrinal influence. Certainly, even as late as 1976, it was not being discussed at the Naval War College. And the lessons of the Vietnam War were not being discussed there either. Undoubtedly, part of the reason for that was that these were not the kinds of wars for which our Navy was ready. In short, the enemy we created did not fight those kinds of wars, although the enemy he created, did.

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



Robert B. Bathurst is an adjunct professor of National Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School who will soon return to the Russian Research Center at Harvard to write and research the subject of the anthro-

pology of war. He has served in Moscow as an assistant naval attaché and has studied at the Army Advanced School of Slavic Studies. Professor Bathurst served at sea during his maritime career as a cadet-midshipman during WWII, in the merchant marines and later in the Navy when he was in charge of a communications detachment afloat. The remainder of his career was in Washington, Newport, Europe and Africa.

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NOTES

1. Michael McGwire, the authority on the Soviet Navy and shrewd observer of the American mind, said that the Soviets make decisions in a perfectly comprehensible way, like the French or the English, but that Americans make decisions—he certainly had the JCS in mind—like Chinese warlords.

2. William C. Bullitt, "How We Won the War and Lost the Peace," *Life*, 30 August 1948, p. 94. As Bullitt's advice had been disregarded and his career curtailed, it is justified to question his account of this discussion. There was, however, an additional confirmation of this same attitude in Frances Perkins' book, *The Roosevelt I Knew* (New York: Viking Press, 1946), p. 383, and in the transcripts of conversations between Harry Hopkins and Stalin in Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946).

3. Adam Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence* (New York: Praeger, 1974), p. 414. Professor Ulam points out that the United States had about one million more men under arms than had the Soviet Union.

4. NSC-68 was reprinted in the *Naval War College Review*, May-June 1975. The text quoted is from page 82. The estimate that the Soviet Union could deliver 100 bombs by 1954 was based upon the Soviet bomber force of TU-95 which could not have made the trip. The TU-95, a bomber which can fly from Murmansk to Havana did not make an appearance until May Day, 1955 and by 1956, there were only 135 of them. At that time, we had a huge bomber force, both in the United States and in Europe.

5. Voorhees, et al., "Report to the Secretary of the Army," 19 April 1950, Voorhees Papers. This episode is discussed by Samuel F. Wells, Jr., "Sounding the Tocsin: NSC 68 and the Soviet Threat," *International Security*, Fall 1979, pp. 141-145.

6. See U.S. editors' analytical introduction to V.D. Sokolovskii, ed., *Soviet Military Strategy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1963), p. 24.

7. A.A. Grechko, *The Armed Forces of the Soviet State*, trans. and published by U.S. Air Force (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1975), p. 347.

8. See Sokolovskii.

9. See, for example, Shlomo Erell, "Israeli SAAR FPB's Pass the Combat Test in the Yom Kippur War," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, September 1974, pp. 115-119.

10. For a provocative discussion of this point, see Martin van Creveld, "Military Lessons of the Yom Kippur War: Historical Perspectives," *The Washington Papers*, no. 24 (Washington: Georgetown University, Center for Strategic and International Studies).

11. James W. Kehoe, Jr., "Warship Design: Ours and Theirs," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, August 1975, pp. 57-65.

12. George Alden Sprague, Jr., "A Historical Inquiry into the Development and Appreciation of the Anti-Ship Cruise Missile Concept," Unpublished Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, Calif.: March 1975, p. 27.

