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*Demonstration of a capability does not prove intent to use that capability but consideration of capability, itself, has long been a feature of military planning. This paper notes that the Soviets have an extensive mining capability, that the use of that capability is logically consistent with Soviet notions of war, and that the United States seems little prepared to counter such a use.*

### SOVIET MINE BARRIER WARFARE CAPABILITIES IN A CENTRAL NUCLEAR WAR

by

**James Preston Layton II**

Current Soviet capabilities to wage mine barrier warfare in the event of a central, nuclear war are so potentially awesome that the likely outcome of such a war would be Soviet military dominance of the Eastern Hemisphere; although the Soviets would be denied the ultimate goal of world mastery as long as the United States retained the capability of projecting superior military power in the Western Hemisphere, unless U.S. forces are restructured and deployed more effectively than they are at present, the United States would be thrown back into an involuntary defense of its own hemisphere.

The logic of this hypothesis rests on the critical importance that Soviet capabilities to wage mine barrier warfare could have on the outcome of a nuclear war. The assertion of this importance is based on an analysis of current Soviet general and military strategy.<sup>1</sup> The extensive capability of using mine barrier warfare is a natural

melding of current Soviet war-winning, military strategy with the creation of forces able to fulfill that strategy. According to the rapidly congealing consensus among Western military analysts, the Soviet leadership believes that they can win a major conflict with the United States, a conflict that will inevitably escalate to a nuclear war unlimited in scope (land, air, sea and space), one of short duration (one of months, not years), and one in which surprise will be a prime element of success.<sup>2</sup> However, as a part of this consensus, there does not seem to be a clear understanding of why the "Soviets maintain extraordinarily high stock-piles of mines,"<sup>3</sup> and why all their "submarines... surface vessels and practically all long-range naval aircraft can carry mines."<sup>4</sup>

Towards a better understanding of the relationship between this extensive mining capability and the Soviet concept of nuclear war, it is worth noting that their strategic rocket forces

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(a formal military branch) will provide the main striking power, but that ultimate success will depend upon the ground forces and their ability to defeat enemy armies and seize enemy territory.<sup>5</sup> As a consequence, the Soviet Navy's two main missions are: to augment the striking power of the strategic rocket forces with submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) and to support the operations of the ground forces in every way possible.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, current Soviet mine warfare capability must be understood in terms of its contribution to the fulfillment of these two main missions. At the same time it is important to discern how mine warfare can contribute to other Soviet naval missions.

Of course it is one thing to note that the Soviets have an extensive mining capability, and another credibly to assert that they would use this capability to wage mine barrier warfare if a nuclear conflict with the United States should erupt. However, it is possible to show that the use of mine barrier warfare would be logically consistent with Soviet notions of nuclear war and could make significant contributions to the attainment of military dominance over the Eastern Hemisphere.

Regarding the first of the two main missions of the Soviet Navy, the development of the 4,800-mile SS-N-8 SLBM has altered radically the perceived use of Soviet nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs).<sup>7</sup> When the range of the SLBMs was much more limited, the prevailing thought among Western military analysts, given the restricted peacetime deployment of Soviet SSBNs, was that in time of war the SSBNs would be surged into position to enable them to strike targets in North America. A collateral assumption was that mine barrier warfare could be used by the United States and its allies to block this anticipated surge of Soviet SSBNs, but that the Soviet Union had no plans itself

to use this kind of warfare in a strategic role. But with the widespread deployment of the 4,800-mile SLBMs it is no longer necessary for Soviet submarines to leave the shelter of home waters to strike their targets;<sup>8</sup> and mine barrier warfare posed Robert Frost's question to Western military analysts, "Before I built a wall I'd ask to know/What I was walling in or walling out."<sup>9</sup> In other words, with the advent of the 4,800-mile SLBM, the use of mine barrier warfare to protect SSBNs made that kind of warfare a more valuable asset to the Soviet side than it was to the U.S. side. During the same time, mine barrier warfare had become of greater moment to the accomplishment of the second of the two main Soviet naval missions, contributing to the success of ground operations. For once it became no longer necessary to break through enemy mine barriers to make SLBM strikes against targets in the United States and Canada, the Soviets must have perceived that mine barriers of their own would make it more difficult for the United States to reinforce its allies during a nuclear war and would free Soviet naval forces to attempt command of the seas along the littorals of the land areas under attack. As a corollary to this thought, Soviet naval forces that had originally been designed for a Mahan-like mission of attacking U.S. naval forces on the open seas can now be perceived as possessing ideal qualities for mopping up U.S. and allied naval forces that could be trapped in the confines of restricted seas blocked by Soviet mine barriers, as well as ideal qualities for defending against enemy naval forces seeking to penetrate the barriers. And it is important to remember that the forces attempting to breach a mine barrier can be expected to suffer a much higher attrition rate than the forces defending the barrier, *ceteris paribus*.<sup>10</sup> Providing particular increment to the Soviet Navy's ability to support ground operations behind the

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protection of mine barriers was the prolonged, dedicated development of a variety of cruise missiles with various effective ranges: standoff, air-launched missiles, and the *Backfire* bomber. In conjunction with these developments, it should be remembered that Soviet naval forces can project power against land targets as well as against sea targets.<sup>11</sup>

Where are the areas that the Soviets might be expected to set up mine barriers in the event of a central, nuclear war? To begin with, there is the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) gap, which includes the critical straits between the Faeroe, Shetland and Orkney Islands. This GIUK gap controls access to the Norwegian and Barents Seas. As an aside, a recent study by the Atlantic Council states that, "The 'Battle for the Norwegian Sea' could be one of the major naval engagements in any 'World War III' between the [U.S.] Alliance and the U.S.S.R.-Pact nations."<sup>12</sup> Also, because the Norwegian and Barents Seas provide access to the Soviet homeland and to the greatest number of Soviet SSBNs, those of the Northern Fleet based on the Kola Peninsula, a second major mine barrier could be expected to be laid from Svalbard to Bear Island to Norway.<sup>13</sup>

The next area of concern is the North and Baltic Seas. Soviet mine barriers across the English Channel and in the Kattegat and Skagerrak off Denmark would not only help to deny the U.S.-led alliance the ability to protect the North Sea oil rigs, but would bolster the Soviet Navy's ability to project power ashore to complement Soviet Army operations. Mine barriers could also be constructed in other parts of the Baltic Sea to serve as fallback positions should a war go unfavorably for the Soviet Union, thus serving as lines of defense, particularly for the Soviet Baltic Republics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and the Gulf of Finland with its access to the city of Leningrad. A mine barrier from Sweden to Gotland to Poland would also provide

a significant line of defense, as would more worse case, limited barriers across the Gulfs of Bothnia and Riga.

A third area likely to be subjected to Soviet mine barrier warfare is the Mediterranean Sea. Natural choke-points ideal for mine barrier warfare are the Straits of Gibraltar and Sicily. If the Soviet Union felt that mine barrier warfare could trap U.S. and allied naval forces in a constricted area in which Soviet naval power (both sea and air) proved to be overwhelming, such warfare would prove highly attractive. If the Soviet Navy was able to destroy the 6th Fleet, and recalling the remarks of former Chief of U.S. Naval Operations Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr. regarding the 1973 Yom Kippur war, there is good reason to be concerned about such an ability<sup>14</sup>—then the resolve of NATO's Southern Flank nations (Italy and Turkey) and other U.S.-allied nations on the Mediterranean to fight the U.S.S.R. and Warsaw Pact nations would be seriously weakened. On the other side of the coin, if a nuclear war was going against the U.S.S.R. after the initial phase, the Soviets could be expected to construct mine barriers across the Suez Canal to cut the supply of goods and oil to its enemies, and to sow mines across the Dardanelles and Bosphorus to defend the Black Sea and the U.S.S.R.

Moving southward on the Eastern Hemisphere, the Indian Ocean is the next sea area that seems likely to be subjected to Soviet mine barrier warfare. Of major interest would be Bab el Mandeb which provides access to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. Of equal interest on the other side of the Arabian Peninsula is the Strait of Hormuz, which provides access to the Persian Gulf. Either of these sea passages, if blocked by Soviet mine barriers, could have a critical bearing on the outcome of an all-out war. For although the United States could probably get along without imported oil in wartime, its European

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allies, and especially Japan, might be forced to surrender if the lack of Middle East oil crippled their economies beyond endurance.<sup>15</sup>

Moving eastward along the southern littoral of the hemisphere, Southeast Asia possesses several strategic sea passages, such as the Strait of Malacca, Sunda Strait and the South China Sea, that might be subjected to Soviet mine barrier warfare. However, because of the distances involved, weaknesses of Soviet Pacific naval forces, and the demands of more important missions it would be difficult for the Soviet Union to maintain effective mine barriers in this region. Nevertheless, the risk of more indiscriminate mining would remain a strong possibility inasmuch as this type of mining would pose more of a threat to the United States than to the Soviet Union. For, in addition to interfering with the transit of oil tankers to U.S. allies in Asia, mine barriers could also hamper the ability of the U.S. 3rd Fleet to move into the Indian Ocean and to reinforce the 2nd and 6th Fleets.<sup>16</sup>

Northward, along the Pacific littoral, there are several seaways that the Soviets might consider laying mine barriers across, including: the Korea, Tsushima, Tsugaru and La Perouse Straits in the Sea of Japan; and those between the Ryukyu Islands in the East China Sea and the Kuril Islands in the Sea of Okhotsk. Finally, in the far north there is the Bering Strait. The use of mine barriers in the Pacific to support Soviet ground operations would depend on the state of belligerency between the Soviet Union, China and Japan. But in any case, mine barriers in this region could serve a significant role in the defense of the U.S.S.R. and its SSBNs.

The preceding geographical survey does not exhaust all possible applications of current Soviet mine warfare capabilities, nor does it queue the priorities for that kind of warfare; all the aforementioned sea areas are wor-

many to be subjected to effective mine barriers. However, the survey does provide a cursory analysis of the relationship of Soviet mine barrier warfare capabilities to the main objective of current Soviet general strategy: military dominance over the Eastern Hemisphere. As mentioned previously, the Soviet Union will be unable to achieve absolute military mastery of the world unless it is able to deny the United States the ability to project superior military power in the Western Hemisphere. However, Soviet motives for initiating a central war in the foreseeable future might be to force the United States into a retreat that would largely confine its military power to the Western Hemisphere, to eliminate China as a military rival in the Eastern Hemisphere, and to gain the prestige of being the most powerful nation on Earth.

To examine the overall strategy of the Soviet Union in relation to mine barrier warfare, this analysis uses the concept of general strategy. In essence, general strategy as a notion seeks a greater understanding of a nation's actions by breaking down those actions into the several component strategies that go to make up the total impression and effect that those actions have on the affairs of mankind. The basic components, or aspects, of general strategy are: military strategy, political strategy, economic strategy, diplomatic strategy and psychological strategy.<sup>17</sup> These interdependent strategies, if events go well in all their particular fields of influence, will have a beneficial, synergistic effect on general strategy because the Soviet Union is a superpower. On the other hand, if one of these aspects is greatly errant, then it will have the opposite or debilitating effect on the influence that a nation's general strategy has on the world.

At the risk of straying too far from the analysis of Soviet mine barrier warfare capabilities, the reader is asked

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to accept military strategy, as a function of general strategy, in the Western sense of the term, implying *anything* that affects the consciously created military strength of a nation. In other words, we are not dealing with military strategy in the Soviet concept of the term, as has been clearly delineated by such Western military analysts as William F. Scott.<sup>18</sup> Also, to understand better the notion of general strategy in the context at hand, it should be noted that the Soviet decision to invest in a major capability to conduct mine warfare has a two-way, contributory relationship to *all* aspects of general strategy. As in the case of the brief survey of geographical areas likely to be subjected to barrier mining, the following examination of the relationship of the Soviet Union's capability to wage this type of warfare to its current general strategy does not intend to be exhaustive, but does intend to give further substance to the idea that Soviet mine warfare capabilities represent a profound military logic on the part of the Soviet leadership that should be of serious concern to the leaders of the United States.

To return to the concept of general strategy and its relation to mine barrier warfare, the first thing needed for understanding the Soviet Union's global schema is to recognize that Soviet political and military strategies are outputs of the same decisionmaking process, which has undergone little real change since Stalin's time. Based on information provided by such analysts as Harriet Fast Scott, this reality can be confirmed by structural-functional analysis.<sup>19</sup> To appreciate the pertinence of Soviet military/political strategy to its general strategy in terms of current mine warfare capabilities, it is useful to trace the evolution of primary Soviet naval missions since World War II. Under Stalin, the prime mission was to destroy U.S. carrier-led naval forces

ments. Then, under Khrushchev, the Soviet Navy had the twofold mission of projecting power ashore with limited-range nuclear weapons and countering the U.S. ability to do the same. Finally, under Brezhnev, the Soviet Navy has the multifaceted, comprehensive mission of contributing to the military domination of the Eastern Hemisphere.

As the missions of the Soviet Navy changed, the contribution that mine warfare was expected to make to the success of these main missions also underwent an evolutionary change. During the first post-WWII period, when the main naval mission was to destroy U.S. carrier forces with conventional means, mine barrier warfare probably was perceived by the Soviets as a purely passive defensive measure to protect the homeland from attack by sea. In the second period, when the primary Soviet naval mission was to project limited-range nuclear power ashore (with SLBMs and cruise missiles fired from surface vessels and submarines), while countering the U.S. ability to do so, Soviet mine barrier warfare was probably still viewed as a defensive measure. However, the defensive nature of mine warfare must have begun to change from passive to active because instead of defending against nuclear strikes by carrier-based aircraft, the Soviets knew they had to become more aggressive in extending their lines of defense to protect against *Polaris*-based SLBMs.<sup>20</sup> This meant guarding sea areas within a 1,200-mile, and then a 2,500-mile arc from targets in the Soviet Union. Unfortunately for the Soviets, they did not then have the capability to wage effective mine barrier warfare and remained extremely vulnerable to U.S. SLBM attacks. During these first two periods, Soviet mine warfare capabilities, besides being dedicated to the defense of the homeland, had the ancillary purpose of blocking enemy ports to deny the United States the ability to reinforce its

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allies, which would thereby contribute to the success of Soviet land operations.

During the present period in the evolution of primary Soviet naval missions, there occurred the now much talked about leap in Soviet military capabilities sometime in the 1970s, which dramatically improved the effectiveness of Soviet strategic capabilities to wage mine barrier warfare. The catalyst for this qualitative change in overall Soviet military capabilities was the rapid improvement in Soviet military technology, which was then welded to an aggressive general strategy. Preeminent in the development of Soviet military technology were the 4,800-mile SS-N-8 SLBM for the *Delta*-class submarines, increasingly accurate multiple warheads, and great improvements in command, control and communications systems.<sup>21</sup>

The net effect of these developments on the future of naval warfare in an unlimited war made it likely that a good portion of American naval power could be destroyed at the onset of nuclear hostility by attacking U.S. carrier forces with multiple-warhead missiles targeted by ocean surveillance satellites.<sup>22</sup> The Soviets intention of attacking carrier forces with ballistic missiles now appears even more probable as they are reputed to have developed a ballistic missile for deployment on their surface vessels. The vulnerability of carriers to nuclear-armed missiles has a direct bearing on the potential effectiveness of Soviet mine barrier warfare. This vulnerability has been legend since Eisenhower's Presidency;<sup>23</sup> and given the tremendous increase in Soviet military capabilities during the last 20 years, it would be a colossal blunder to expect carriers to survive a massive ballistic missile attack today. If the Soviet Union used mine barrier warfare in conjunction with a massive attack on U.S. carriers in the initial phase of a nuclear war, the Soviet

Navy would be in an ideal position to exploit the barriers to fulfill its two main missions: projecting nuclear power against strategic targets in North America (or, in case the long-range SLBMs are withheld from the initial strike, being capable of such projection) and supporting the land forces.

It is patently clear from the writings of the commander in chief of the Soviet Navy, Sergei Gorshkov, that he believes that the failure of the German submarine campaign against the Allied Atlantic sea lines of communication (SLOCs) in WWII was caused by the inability of the Germans to back up their submarine effort with proper air and surface vessel support.<sup>24</sup> If Soviet submarine forces could operate behind mine barriers in restricted seas near the U.S.S.R. where superior air and other seapower was available, Gorshkov could achieve his aim of total sea control in areas of vital Soviet interest in the Eastern Hemisphere. Therefore, the Soviets would be highly motivated to destroy U.S. carriers as early as possible in an all-out war. Despite the vulnerability of carriers to nuclear weapons and the concomitant logic that the United States may be ill-advised to continue to rely on them as the backbone of its Navy, critics of this view praise their power projection capabilities below the nuclear threshold. However, this capability may not be worth the cost; for even in the Vietnam war, they proved of limited effectiveness in projecting power ashore. And in a scenario involving the limited use of nuclear weapons (a war in which Soviet forces did not become actively involved), a squadron led by missile cruisers willing to exercise the nuclear option under the proper political conditions might prove to be more effective than the extremely expensive, vulnerable carriers.

In relation to their role in mine barrier warfare, it should be noted that the missions of the recently deployed

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Soviet aircraft carriers do not emulate those of American carriers. The Soviet carriers are ideally designed to function as antisubmarine warfare platforms (and are designated so by the Soviets), operating in the advantageous environment that effective Soviet mine barriers would provide in a nuclear war, especially one initiated by the Soviet Union. Instead of an anti-SLOC campaign envisioned by some Western analysts,<sup>25</sup> the Soviet Union would not run the risk of exposing its naval forces to the high attrition rates that could be expected if they either attempted to force their way through American mine barriers (like one possibly across the GIUK gap) onto the high seas, or attempted to operate in areas where significant air cover was not available. Instead, their naval forces would operate behind their own rapidly sown mine barriers, attempting to mop up U.S. naval forces trapped within mine-barricaded seas and to prevent future penetration and reinforcement in the Eastern Hemisphere by U.S. naval forces. Coming or going, the U.S. Navy would then have to pay the exorbitant high toll in attrition that mine barriers are capable of extracting.

Departing the forerunning examination of Soviet military/political strategy, this analysis focuses next on the relationship of the economic strategy aspect of current Soviet general strategy to mine barrier warfare. According to the Soviet concept of the course that a nuclear war would take, and in spite of their massive civil defense program with its considerable effort to insure industrial recovery, there is a strong possibility that the U.S.S.R. would exact recovery strength from West Europe and U.S. Asian allies to rebuild its own society at the termination of war. To that end, the forward deployment of mine barriers would limit the destruction of allied ports that the U.S.S.R. might want to

Likewise, a more limited version of mine warfare, the mining of critical enemy ports, might now appear as a less attractive option to the Soviets because it could interfere with the reinforcement of their own ground forces and the lengthy, subsequent clearing effort that might be required could seriously delay their own economic recovery. However, the limited use of mining of some U.S.-allied ports can be expected in conjunction with the limited use of Soviet seaborne invasion forces. During the war, Soviet naval forces would not have to be diverted from mine barrier warfare duty to defend Soviet SLOCs, inasmuch as the Soviets appear able to sustain themselves by overland supply routes.

The next aspect of general strategy to be considered in the context of Soviet mine barrier capabilities is diplomatic strategy, which in the Soviet scheme of things is closely linked to the military/political aspect, as the disclosures of Col. Oleg Penkovskiy and other Soviet dissidents have revealed.<sup>26</sup> Also, as a final note to the notion of general strategy, Soviet internal political matters are put under the heading of political strategy (military/political in the Soviet context), and external political matters are placed under diplomatic strategy for conceptual purposes. As an example of Soviet diplomatic strategy, the U.S.S.R. has pushed the topic of arms reduction in Europe to the point that Norway, Denmark and Iceland, nations of critical concern in the probable Soviet plans for mine barrier warfare in the event of total war, were reported to be originally reluctant to accept the 1,000 to 1,500-mile *Pershing II* nuclear-armed missile and long-range cruise missiles until NATO-Warsaw Pact arms reduction talks were held.<sup>27</sup> If the United States wanted to overcome Soviet mine barriers sown to enhance the effectiveness of the Soviet Northern and Baltic Fleets, and wanted to be in a position to



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defend against Soviet naval forces operating against NATO's Northern Flank, the basing of these two missiles on those nations and their islands could be of vital importance to the outcome of an unlimited, nuclear war, if one took place in the next few years. On NATO's Southern Flank the Soviets also pursue a soothing diplomatic strategy aimed at building closer relations with nations on the Mediterranean littoral while not aggressively threatening the internal stability of nations with real, or traditional alliance to the United States, including France, Spain, Malta, Greece, Egypt, Israel and the NATO nations of Italy and Turkey. This is particularly so in countries with large Communist Parties. In the event of a nuclear war, if the Soviet Union were able to seal off the Mediterranean with mine barriers, and destroyed the enclosed U.S. 6th Fleet, the resolve of these nations to fight on would be seriously put in jeopardy. As noted earlier, during the Yom Kippur war the Soviet Navy demonstrated that it might have been superior to the 6th Fleet in the Eastern Hemisphere;<sup>28</sup> with mine barrier warfare and other improvements in Soviet naval power since 1973, the same might prove true of the entire Mediterranean in the event of a central, nuclear war.

Further south, in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf areas, Soviet diplomatic strategy has been more aggressive and opportunistic. Last year's Soviet decision to switch allegiances and back Ethiopia in its war with Somalia (where the U.S.S.R. had built an important naval facility at Berbera) can in part be explained as offering a more attractive option in terms of Ethiopia's providing an interior position for mine barrier warfare that would permit sealing off the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. This last piece of analysis is, admittedly, highly speculative inasmuch as the desire to put military pressure on Egypt during a total war by making joint

Ethiopia-Libya land operations against Egypt an option is also a strong motive for the Soviet switch in allegiances. The Soviet desire for strategic chokepoints in waters of the Eastern Hemisphere suitable for mine barrier warfare will probably impel them to seek improved relations with the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen), possibly at the expense of their present ally, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen) in the future. For the moment North Yemen has, in effect, blackmailed Saudi Arabia into financing the \$300 million in U.S. arms that North Yemen wants following its 1979 border war with Soviet-backed South Yemen. In return, North Yemen has agreed not to renew the contracts of 100 Soviet military advisors and, presumably, to cancel a postwar arms agreement signed with Moscow late last summer. However, should Saudi Arabia-U.S. relations weaken, the Soviets can be expected to increase efforts to pull North Yemen into a Soviet military orbit. Furthermore, this Soviet desire for interior positions to improve the effectiveness of mine warfare in denying the United States and its allies the oil resources of the Persian Gulf in case of an all-out war will probably make for a continued Soviet effort to expand its military influence into Iran and Oman.<sup>29</sup>

The last phase of current Soviet general strategy, psychological strategy (sometimes called ideological strategy) is greatly improved by the capability to conduct extensive mine barrier warfare. For with the ability to close seas along the littoral of the Eastern Hemisphere in the initial stage of a nuclear war, the Soviets do not need an extensive network of forward naval bases to fulfill their naval missions. Not needing these forward bases allows them to push their line that it is the United States, not the U.S.S.R., that has imperialistic designs on the territory of other nations.

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However, other Soviet actions can have a strong psychological effect without being primarily ideological. The concern in the United States about Soviet combat troops in Cuba has been impassioned, but the earlier discovery that the Soviets had put combat troops in the Kuril Islands almost went without notice in the United States, despite considerable concern in Japan.<sup>30</sup> In the wake of perceived U.S. indifference to the Soviet moves that threaten their security, U.S. Asian allies might demonstrate little resolve to fight against the U.S.S.R. should a nuclear war erupt.<sup>31</sup> Certainly if the Soviet Union could use mine barrier warfare to help coopt Japan into early submission during a nuclear war, the Soviet ability to wage mine barrier warfare in Asia against China and the United States would be much more menacing. Worldwide, Soviet actions like those in Cuba and the Kurils could add to the total psychological effect of the early stages in a nuclear war if the Soviets sowed mine barriers and U.S. allies found themselves suddenly cut off from reinforcement because the United States did not demonstrate the ability to counter this type of warfare. At the same time, if Soviet mine barrier warfare capabilities remain relatively ignored by U.S. military analysts, the element of surprise that this type of warfare would provide could prove to be devastating. For at this point, beside the already mentioned vulnerability of U.S. naval forces to mine barrier warfare, defense of ports and countermine warfare is the responsibility of individual U.S.-allied nations and is not a coordinated effort, even within NATO. Among other U.S.-alliance weaknesses in countermine warfare are: the general lack of interoperability among NATO forces, the fact that critically positioned Iceland has no minesweepers of its own, and the air defenses of the Netherlands and Belgium do not face seaward.<sup>32</sup>

As a parting comment to this assessment of current Soviet mine barrier warfare capabilities in relation to the concept of Soviet general strategy, the interdependent nature of the aspects of the concept makes it extremely difficult to neatly pigeonhole Soviet actions into specific aspects of general strategy. However, this analysis has intended to demonstrate that because of a multitude of reasons, Soviet actions have had a synergistic effect on that nation's capability to conduct mine barrier warfare in the event of a nuclear war. Critics of this analysis might rightfully argue that demonstration of a capability does not prove intent. Nevertheless, this analysis has tried to explore the possible uses the Soviet Union could put its extraordinary stockpile of mines and its extraordinary ability to sow those mines to in total war. No detailed attempt has been made to offer recommendations to counter current Soviet naval warfare capabilities, other than those inherent in different parts of the analysis of mine barrier warfare. Lending to the credibility of (or refuting) this analysis would be a computer simulation of the effectiveness of Soviet mine barrier warfare given a concerted ICBM attack on U.S. carriers at the onset of nuclear hostilities (using models and data bases that emphasize Soviet capabilities of conducting this kind of warfare). Without being able to account for the strength of the opponents' wills in a nuclear war—for that is in the realm of God—well-planned computer simulation would likely show that in the realm of the knowable, current Soviet mine barrier warfare capabilities would sink U.S. hopes for victory over the Eastern Hemisphere in a nuclear war.<sup>33</sup>

If top U.S. decisionmakers perceive that the Soviet Union at present can achieve its objective of military dominance over the Eastern Hemisphere, then they should make those decisions necessary to enable them to

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contest this dominance at a later date. Of course, such a stall could fail ever to achieve the desired results if the Soviet Union decides to risk a war to prevent the United States from ever again being able to dominate that hemisphere through any possible combination of force—in other words, launches a nuclear war to throw U.S. military influence back to the Western Hemisphere once and for all. If U.S. decisionmakers perceive that the Soviets can now achieve their goal of military mastery over the Eastern Hemisphere, and do not want to pay the price to overcome this mastery sometime in the future, then it would behoove them voluntarily to turn their attention to the Western Hemisphere as the focal point of defense for vital national interests.

Finally, if U.S. leaders do not perceive that the Soviet Union, regardless of its mine barrier warfare capabilities, can win a nuclear war and drive the United States out of the Eastern Hemisphere they should still be concerned about the almost nonexistent U.S. credibility in being able to counter Soviet mine barrier warfare capabilities in the event of a central, nuclear war.

### BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



James P. Layton, an independent scholar, was educated at Yale and New York Universities and the University of Vermont. His research interests are presently concentrated on Soviet military and naval strategy.

### NOTES

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2. See Soviet military writers and military analysts, particularly V.D. Sokolovskiy et al., *Soviet Military Strategy* 3rd ed. (New York: Crane, Russak, Inc., 1975); U.S. Air Force, *Soviet Military Thought Series* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off.), listed by Gene E. Townsend, "A Charter for Better Understanding," *Air Force Magazine*, March 1980; and articles translated from the Russian in *Strategic Review*.

3. Paul H. Nitze, et al., *Securing the Seas, The Soviet Naval Challenge and Western Alliance Options* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1979), p. 403.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

5. See Sokolovskiy and other works cited in note 2.

6. See writings of Sergei G. Gorshkov, particularly *Red Star Rising at Sea* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1974) and *The Sea Power of the State* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1979).

7. Richard T. Ackley, "The Wartime Role of Soviet SSBNs," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, June 1978.

8. *Ibid.*, Ackley also reported that the Soviets had tested the SS-N-8 to a range of 5,600 miles and may have deployed a new *Typhoon*-class SSBN, "armed with 20 or 24 MIRVed missiles with a range of 6,000 miles." However, *Jane's Fighting Ships 1979-80*, reports that the first *Typhoon* is still being built at Severodvinsk and possibly will have 24 launchers for the 4,600 mi. SS-N-18.

9. Robert Frost, "Mending Wall," in *The Poetry of Robert Frost* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), p. 33.

10. Nitze, et al., pps. 360, 364.

11. Ackley, p. 41.

12. Nitze, et al., p. 110.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 218.

14. See Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., *On Watch* (New York: Quadrangle, 1976), who reported that some U.S. oil companies' European affiliates initially refused to cooperate with the U.S. Government's demands that European oil supplies be tapped to meet the needs of U.S. and Israel forces involved in the Yom Kippur war. Also see Nitze, who reports that, "The Soviet air and naval facility at Conakry in Guinea, for instance, is almost exactly 1,000 miles south of the Tropic of Cancer. U.S. use of roughly equivalent naval facilities at Recife in Brazil was recently terminated as a result of U.S.-Brazilian political disagreements";

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p. 196; and, "Similarly, we have found our forces unwelcome in Turkey as a result of the Cyprus situation and unwelcome temporarily in Spain and some NATO countries during the Middle East war of 1973"; p. 245.

15. Nitze, p. 160.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

17. Michalowski.

18. See William F. Scott, *Soviet Sources of Military Doctrine and Strategy* (New York: Crane, Russak, 1975).

19. See Harriet F. Scott and William F. Scott, *The Armed Forces of the USSR* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1978); and Harriet F. Scott's article in *Air Force Magazine*, March 1979.

20. Ackley, p. 36.

21. See information on the 4,800 mi. SS-N-8 SLBM in Nitze, p. 278. Also, assessments of current Soviet trends in military technology offered by George J. Keegan, Jr., particularly, "Soviets Push for Beam Weapon," *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, 2 May 1977; and "New Assessment Put on Soviet Threat," *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, 28 March 1977.

22. Nitze, p. 255.

23. See Douglas Kinnard, *President Eisenhower and Strategy Management: A Study in Defense Politics* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1977), especially Twining's remark that carriers, "were not of great value in general war," p. 95.

24. See Gorshkov.

25. The emphasis that the Atlantic Council study puts on such a Soviet anti-SLOC campaign is representative of the concerns of these analysts.

26. See Oleg V. Penkovskiy, *The Penkovskiy Papers* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965). The Soviets put great stock in intelligence operations, and it should be remembered that the U.S.S.R. would have fared much worse in World War II without the information on German military plans supplied by the "Lucy Ring." See Pierre Accoce and Pierre Quet, *A Man Called Lucy* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1967).

27. See *The New York Times*, various accounts in December 1979; and "NATO approves plan to deploy new American intermediate-range missiles, despite objections by Belgium and Netherlands," *The New York Times* Index, 1-15 December 1979, p. 69.

28. See Zumwalt.

29. Loren Jenkins, "North Yemen, Between East and West," *Newsweek*, 24 March 1980; and *The New York Times*, 19 March 1980.

30. *The New York Times* reported Soviet troops in the Kurils on 31 January 1979. On 31 August the U.S. State Department announced the discovery of 2,000 to 3,000 Soviet combat troops in Cuba. Then on 27 September 1979 the *Times* reported, "Japanese Foreign Ministry says U.S. told Japan that Soviet soldiers have apparently built military base on disputed island of Shibotan." The island guards the passageway of the Nemuro Strait, separating Japan and the Soviet Union.

31. Nitze, p. 160.

32. See *ibid.*, pps. 199-220.

33. An interesting study in this direction is T.K. Jones and W. Scott Thompson, "Central War and Civil Defense," *Orbis*, Fall 1978.

