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President's Notes: Challenge!

B. J. Semmes Jr.
U.S. Navy

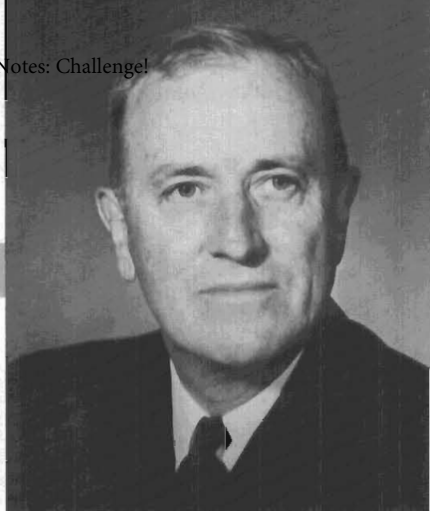
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CHALLENGE !



In early November 1971, some 91 senior naval officers representing 42 nations assembled at the Naval War College for the second International Seapower Symposium. Meeting in an academic forum designed to encourage a free and open exchange of ideas and opinions, this distinguished group was most effective in increasing understanding on all sides of the various challenges and opportunities facing maritime nations today.

The concept of an International Seapower Symposium was developed by Vice Adm. Richard G. Colbert who, as President of the Naval War College, hosted the first symposium in 1969. He sought to "provide a forum for discussion where each participant could discuss freely and openly all aspects of maritime affairs of interest." So successful was the first gathering 2 years ago that requests for a second symposium were voiced almost immediately.

In providing facilities for the second International Seapower Symposium, the Naval War College again sought to provide the atmosphere wherein naval leaders could continue to examine and discuss both the substance and the implications of today's changing strategic and maritime environment. It is a tribute to the success of the symposium that Admiral Sir Horace Law of the Royal Navy complimented the United States for managing to "channel and direct" the discussions without attempting to dominate them. Thus, the 5-day symposium prospered in an aura of true internationalism.

The busy schedule of the symposium was highlighted by four formal addresses, with subsequent discussions being conducted both in plenary session

and in each of five regional committees. Following a briefing by the War College on the "Soviet Challenge at Sea," Admiral Zumwalt delivered a keynote address on "Reality and Opportunity." He reviewed many of the significant changes in the maritime world and emphasized the totality of maritime interrelationships.

Former Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Arleigh A. Burke addressed the symposium on the second day. He discussed "Problems, Solved and Unsolved, that We Are Mutually Facing at Sea." He stressed that the problems were innumerable, but he specifically noted five: (1) maintaining the spirit of our naval personnel, (2) the necessity for the people in each navy to help convince their countrymen that national security is important, (3) a change in the attitude of Americans toward overseas commitment—a change which led, indirectly, to the Nixon Doctrine, (4) the American foreign military assistance programs, and (5) the growing complexity and sophistication of our ships and aircraft. Admiral Burke emphasized that the prospects for mutual problem-solving were especially bright in view of the cooperation exemplified at the symposium, when he stated:

Over the years, steadily—consistently—our navies have adopted common methods, similar tactics. We have developed equipment and systems for communication.

Technically we have grown closer together. This is important, but much more important is that we have freely and frankly communicated our ideas to develop the close understanding of each other that is necessary to achieve willing cooperation. This has been accomplished by face-to-face direct discussion. We have not—and should not—always agree with each other—for as with men themselves—each nation has its own priority listing of concerns to be considered. But you should be proud of your accomplishment in being able to hear each other out and to adjust your positions within the limits of your own priorities so as to increase our solidarity in moving toward the common goals we share.

A session was devoted to seminar discussions of “The Maritime World and the Navy Role” at meetings of the five regional committees. These committees were chaired by a different nation each day on a rotating schedule; the United States was not included in the rotation for committee chairmanship since as host nation it seemed inappropriate for the United States to assume that function as well. The division of the participating nations into committees was purely geographical: the South Atlantic and Eastern Pacific nations were drawn into one group; the Indian Ocean and Southwest Pacific comprised another; the northern Atlantic and Baltic a third; the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean a fourth; and the remaining nations comprised the Committee of the Pacific.

The most frequently discussed topics included the significance of the Soviet naval expansion, the importance of multinational cooperation on the seas, the need for each nation to recognize its vital interest in the free movement of sea commerce, the high cost of new and modern ship construction, and the

calling of future regional and international symposia.

There were two prevalent views concerning the future of ship construction. The larger nations tended to support the development of a multinational ASW frigate somewhat along the lines of the “Free World Frigate” concept developed at Newport in the Naval Command College in 1970; while the smaller nations, concerned with coastal defense and counterinfiltration, argued for a smaller, flexible, multipurpose ship. There was general agreement that international cooperation in new ship construction would be a step to reduce the rising costs of modern weapons systems.

It was recommended that another international symposium should be held in 2 years and that regional symposia should be held during the interim. It was suggested that it might be helpful to invite representatives of naval-related industries and members of scientific organizations.

On the fourth day the U.S. Undersecretary of State (Political Affairs), U. Alexis Johnson, spoke on “Our Mutual Interdependence.” In a candid presentation, the Secretary stressed the political problems involving cooperation on the seas: the current tendency of nations to extend the limit of their territorial waters, the rights of free passage in the straights and narrows that are adjunct to the world sealanes, and the advantageous possibilities of mutual cooperation for the exploitation of the seabed.

On the final day of the symposium, the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Ralph W. Cousins, discussed “Our Future at Sea” in which he sounded both a prediction and a warning. He said,

I have no doubt that our future at sea is a collective one—as friends, allies, and trading partners. . . . But, time may not be on our side, and each passing day brings us closer to the hour when

events may test the accuracy of our perceptions. It would be a cruel irony if it were to turn out that we had seen the hazards but failed to act in time to offset them.

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of the symposium was the growth of personal friendships among these leaders of the free world navies. The spirit of free interchange and academic freedom, which has always characterized the Naval War College, fostered a climate in which the development of mutual understanding and personal friendship were bound to prosper. The spirit as reflected in the response of the participants was particularly encouraging. Admiral Sudomo, Chief of Staff of the Indonesian Navy, stated that "To me, by far the significant event of this conference has been the opportunity to meet with the other chiefs of navies.

The cooperation which has been generated is invaluable for the future."

The second International Seapower Symposium was an unqualified success. It was not designed to negotiate problems and reach pragmatic solutions, but rather was an attempt to bring together seagoing professionals to discuss problems and opportunities common to the maritime nations of the world. The friendly cooperation which prevailed throughout the week was, in itself, justification for the gathering and will, hopefully, make possible even greater cooperation in the future.



B. J. SEMMES, JR.
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy
President, Naval War College