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Challenge

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CHALLENGE!



The framework for analysis of future U.S. maritime strategy has been changed considerably by the precepts expounded in the Nixon Doctrine. Indeed, this historic statement has postulated a new and different approach to the entire problem of U.S. foreign policy and national strategy of which maritime strategy is an integral part. The doctrine, as embodied in the President's report to Congress on foreign policy, is perhaps the most comprehensive declaration on the subject ever enunciated by a President.

Of the three cornerstones he laid down, *partnership*, *strength*, and *willingness to negotiate*, the concept of *partnership* has particularly far-reaching implications for our Armed Forces and especially the Navy.

The principle of partnership requires that the obligations of peace, as well as its benefits, must be shared. In the words of the President, "Peace requires partnership." The President has called for a low-profile U.S. presence abroad, commensurate with our treaty obligations, and a much greater dependence on our allies to assume a larger part in the defense of their own and our shared interests.

The Nixon Doctrine is the embodiment of many factors influencing U.S. foreign policy and, in turn, its major tool—maritime strategy. In order to gain a better perspective of the problems and considerations affecting the latter, it is important to examine those factors bearing on the evolution of the Nixon Doctrine which will directly or indirectly influence our future maritime

strategy. Five such factors are identified below.

(1) The Nixon Doctrine reflects a general reordering of our national priorities away from external involvement and toward pressing domestic problems. Frustration with Vietnam has created an awareness of the limitations of American military and economic power. It has inflamed already restless youth and created an atmosphere conducive to violence whether in the universities or on the streets of America's cities. From this has emerged an emotional wave of antimilitary sentiment which affects all aspects of military operations, including our basic defense posture.

Coincident with the frustration and dissatisfaction with Vietnam is domestic unrest. Years of neglect in the areas of poverty, the environment, race relations, urban renewal, and crime control have loosed powerful streams of consciousness through our society. This has encouraged an examination into our national goals and objectives with the result being the general reorientation now reflected in the Nixon Doctrine and in the Federal budget for Fiscal Year 1971. Already apparent is a reduced share of the Federal dollar to be allocated to defense, now and in the near future.

(2) In the inflationary climate of today's economy, shipbuilding costs are spiraling at an astonishing rate. The

2 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

present level of these costs prohibits the large-scale modernization program which the Navy so urgently needs if it is to maintain its historic operational capabilities.

Coupled with this is the serious situation of bloc obsolescence of a large number of our warships. Even with inactivation of many of our oldest ships this year, over 50 percent of the ships remaining are over 19 years old, and many are 25 to 30 years old. Because of the cost, it is unlikely that we will be able to replace many of these ships on a better than 1-to-2 or 1-to-3 basis. Thus, it is evident that we are moving toward a smaller, and hopefully higher, quality Navy, but one with significantly diminished capabilities in promoting U.S. influence abroad. Our naval deployments worldwide inevitably must be reduced.

(3) The wave of growing antimilitary sentiment currently extending across the country is having a deleterious effect on that element most crucial to any organization—personnel. There is no substitute for good officers and men, and the Armed Forces must have a steady input of intelligent and ambitious young men and women if we are to maintain the credibility of our defense posture now and in the future. But the military is not getting that input. The retention rate for both officers and men in all the services is at or near a historic low, and the impact could well be critical.

(4) The current condition of our many allies and friendly countries bears practically no resemblance to that of two decades ago, in the aftermath of World War II. These nations have strengthened their social, economic, and political fiber substantially. They are now proud and willing to assume a larger share in the defense of their own and our common interests. However, in many instances, they lack the material means needed to accomplish this new role. Secretary Laird has stated, "This

new policy requires that we place more emphasis on making available to our allies appropriate military equipment." In effect, we will need to revise and expand our Military Assistance Programs to meet this basic requirement of the new strategy.

(5) Finally, the preceding four factors are operating simultaneously in the face of a dramatic increase in Soviet maritime capabilities and expanding worldwide operations which is unprecedented in history. In the last two decades the Soviet Union has soared from a third-rate maritime nation to challenge our position as the mightiest ocean-going power today.

The U.S.S.R. has very significantly adopted a balanced approach to its maritime expansion. In number of ships, the Soviet Navy is the largest in the world, and it is the most modern. Soviet naval operations are becoming more frequent, pervasive, and increasingly capable of reducing options available to our fleets. By the end of this decade, the Soviets plan to have increased their merchant fleet over 15-fold from its post-World War II level—a dynamic rate of expansion approached by no other nation. The advanced design and enormous range of their great fishing fleet permit fishing for extended periods in all the richest fishing areas of the world. Finally, the largest, best equipped, and most far-reaching oceanographic and survey fleet in the world is also Russian.

And in contrast to this tremendous expansion of all elements of Soviet seapower, our merchant fleet continues to grow smaller, our fishing fleet is withering, and our oceanographic program apparently lacks dynamism and coordinated leadership.

This, then, is the framework in which future maritime strategy needs to be appraised. Clearly the Nixon Doctrine is a realistic approach to our foreign policy. It is based on the facts of the situation at home and abroad. Further,

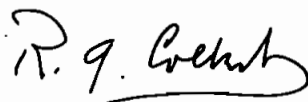
it would appear to reflect the desires of the American public.

Our challenge then is to examine how U.S. maritime strategy can be most effectively developed and implemented in the light of the doctrine and the factors outlined above. The question is: How can all of this be made compatible within one coherent strategy?

Clearly part of the answer is to encourage and rely upon increased assistance and cooperation from our allies. Regional arrangements which can sustain the freedom of the seas and protect shipping in various areas of the world are one logical goal. Such arrangements have the additional advantage of cost-sharing.

However, our maritime strategy must be based on more than this, for the doctrine continues to emphasize support of our existing defense commitments worldwide. For our strength to be credible it will be essential that the U.S. flag continue to fly in some form of visible and meaningful forward

strategy. With reductions in our land-based forces on foreign territory likely (coupled with the practical fact of progressive loss of our overseas bases), it would seem that the most viable forward strategy in the years ahead may well be one emphasizing our naval and naval air forces—a so-called *BLUE WATER STRATEGY*. Such forces, working in close cooperation and in mutual support of allied regional naval forces in key world areas could be the cornerstones of a broad maritime strategy which is both responsive to the Nixon Doctrine and to the world we face today.



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