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Challenge

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Next month represents the second anniversary of the founding of NATO's Standing Naval Force Atlantic, a concept that became reality when approved at the NATO Ministerial Meeting in Brussels in December 1967. Historically there is little "new" in the concept that men of different nationalities can serve effectively together at sea. Throughout recorded maritime history men have joined forces to battle a common enemy. The crew of John Paul Jones' ship, the *Bon Homme Richard*, was drawn from many nations. Some of the sailors had never set foot in the United States nor in the fledgling nation's ship whose flag they then so gallantly defended. In more recent times, warships of allied nations have sailed together in two world wars.

Cover: Standing Naval Forces Atlantic group at sea. Ships represented from left to right are: USS *Holder* (United States), FGS *Koeln* (Germany), HMS *Brighton* (United Kingdom), HMCS *Gatineau* (Canada), HNLMS *Holland* (Netherlands).

Now, for the first time in modern history, a permanent, international naval force exists, the Standing Naval Force Atlantic. The in-depth purposes of STANAVFORLANT are as multifarious as NATO itself. But perhaps the two primary functions are to provide a symbol of political and military solidarity of the alliance and to provide a seagoing catalyst of naval security spanning the Atlantic Ocean from Europe to America.

When the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was established in April 1949, its purpose was to provide its member nations with some measure of collective security against Soviet aggression in Europe. Having been blunted in their attempts to expand over land, the Soviets have embarked on a new course to gain influence and power, namely through the selective use of seapower.

During the past two decades the Soviet Union, traditionally a land power, has become the second most powerful maritime nation in the world, both in quality and quantity. This achievement constitutes one of the most remarkable and, until recently, the least publicized transformations in world history. This Soviet expansion to seaward was accomplished by a rapid and balanced growth in maritime power which includes numerous facets of strength.

Confronted with this ever-increasing Soviet maritime threat, the countries of the NATO alliance have found it necessary to reappraise their overall defensive strategy. There can be no doubt that the Soviet expansion to seaward has had an effect on the decision to establish a permanent NATO Naval Force in the Atlantic area.

The Standing Naval Force Atlantic is tasked with a variety of missions, not the least of which is to symbolize NATO's resolve to counter any threat to NATO's freedom of the seas and sea-borne communications so vital to the existence and survival of the Atlantic

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community. The facts of geography make NATO almost entirely reliant upon sea lines of communications. These facts give the Warsaw Pact, with its internal lines of communication, a unique advantage. The Soviets could exert various types of sea pressures without equal concern for the necessity to utilize the ocean highways. The security, prosperity, and, indeed, the economic viability of NATO countries are directly bound up with their freedom to use the sea.

The Standing Naval Force is composed of between four and eight destroyers or frigates operating together as one squadron on a continuous basis. Ships of various nationalities will normally operate with the Standing Naval Force on a rotational basis being relieved by a unit of the same nationality or by another nationality. This rotational procedure offers the least disruption to national training programs and overhaul cycles for the ships involved. It permits the maximum numbers of ships to participate as units of the integrated NATO force. Command of the squadron will be rotated among the participating navies. The commander of the squadron will serve for approximately 1 year before being relieved.

The Standing Naval Force came into being after three successful MATCH-MAKER exercises. Because of the excellent training benefits from these exer-

cises, it was concluded that the force was both feasible and highly practical. Now greater usage may be made of individual national services, thus maximizing the state of training facilities for all the navies participating. More significantly, the Standing Naval Force Atlantic spotlights the political and military solidarity of the NATO alliance. It demonstrates with each new exercise and port visit that many NATO ships, each flying its individual national flag, can operate in unity and common cause.

Thus, in summary, the objectives of STANAVFORLANT are to:

1. Maintain naval effectiveness within NATO at a high level by providing squadron experience and training on a continuous multinational basis.
2. Provide clear and unmistakable evidence of the solidarity and unity of the NATO nations by showing the flags of various member nations in a single, multinational force.
3. Be available and ready for immediate deployment to the scene of any possible contingency situation to reaffirm the solidarity of the NATO alliance and provide a visible deterrent force.
4. Provide the initial elements around which a more powerful and versatile NATO naval force could be formed.

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CHALLENGE!

For some time now, the Naval War College has fostered and developed a novel concept whose portent and benefits to the maritime nations of the Free World may extend well into the future. This idea has reached maturity, and the Naval War College Seapower Symposium, to be held at the College this month with participation of up to 40 countries, represents its culmination.

Though entirely unconnected with the Naval Command Course, the inception of the Symposium was encouraged by the progress that course has made. The Naval Command Course, made up as it is of senior foreign officers of Free World navies, is now in its fourteenth year at Newport. Its history is an unbroken chronology of warm friendships, close associations, and mutual understanding, formed between individuals, but representing a durable and meaningful bond among the naval services of the countries which have participated. The unqualified success of the Naval Command Course gave rise to the thought that a conference of the top naval leaders of these forty friendly navies might be productive. A convocation of these leaders was envisioned, to discuss professional matters of international maritime importance and to share their separate insights and experience.

Of course, one of the more tangible measures of the success of the Naval Command Course is the fact that so large a portion of its graduates have reached the highest levels of their naval leadership, including chiefs of navies. It is therefore not surprising that a good many of the members of the Symposium are to be Naval Command

Course alumni. This is particularly significant since the program will be conducted exclusively in English, and former Naval Command Course students have an added advantage in this regard by virtue of their ten months experience in Newport.

The emphasis of the Symposium will be on that same spirit of free interchange, the academic freedom which has always characterized the Naval War College. The Naval Command Course has amply demonstrated that there are common interests and experience, shared among naval officers of all countries, which transcend the confines of national policy and political expediency. It is to be hoped that a similar feeling of mutual affinity among the members of the Symposium will lead to free communication and a broader understanding on all sides of the various challenges and opportunities facing our maritime nations today. Almost inevitably, this kind of contact is bound to foster and cement mutual understanding and personal friendship among the participants.

The structure of this Symposium is such that each participant will be at complete liberty to raise any issue he feels worthy of international maritime concern, in the knowledge that none of his comments will be attributable. Of the vast spectrum of topics thus exposed, one of the most pressing and appropriate—may well prove to be that

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of multinational cooperation in regional peacekeeping alliances. It is hardly necessary to observe that the balance of maritime strength in the world has changed substantially in the last few years. Moreover, the staggering number of developing nations which have recently begun the long journey toward economic and political stability provides a greatly increased potential for constructive progress, as well as for disturbance and unrest. Needless to say, the elimination of sources of possible conflict is of far more importance in the modern world of nuclear stockpiles.

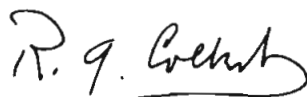
The Symposium may turn its attention to some system whereby the peace, order and tranquility of volatile areas can be maintained in relative equilibrium. For some time now, the United States has borne the legacy of immediate postwar years in a virtually unilateral effort to perform this task. Now, however, the internal political complexion of this country makes unlikely any extension of unilateral United States overseas commitments, and may well militate toward a reduction of those involvements we have traditionally undertaken. The smaller nations of the world are in a position now to exert much more leverage in the maintenance of stability than formerly.

The Symposium will undertake to examine this new potential in the light of current maritime trends. Increasing speed and efficiency of communications, coupled with the rapid expansion of oceangoing trade, act to produce maritime economic interdependence on an ever broadening scale. The impact of this pattern on construction of merchant and fishing fleets, on propulsion design, and on hydrographic research, is an issue of immediate concern to all participants. Also of interest are the questions surrounding freedom of the

seas: the delimitation of territorial waters, the legal status of the ocean floor and its exploitation, the individual fishing rights of maritime as well as landlocked nations, and rights of innocent passage through sea narrows by naval vessels.

With regard to the protection of the principles of freedom of the seas, one of the most promising alternatives might prove to be the organization of multinational naval arrangements on a regional basis, to act as peacekeeping forces under the principle of Article 52 of the United Nations Charter in those parts of the world's oceans which are threatened with aggression, subversion, or manipulation by larger powers. In various areas, the need may well be felt for a stabilizing influence—a multinational squadron with the dual advantage of military credibility and local popularity. The Standing Naval Force Atlantic could perhaps serve as a prototype, *mutatis mutandis*, for similar forces elsewhere in the world. In any case, it demonstrates the viability of the concept of the multinational naval force.

All these and related questions clearly need investigation in a forum of open dialogue. In view of the atmosphere of the Symposium, the brilliance and responsibility of the personnel involved, and the community of their interests, the program seems certain to generate some stimulating and important results.



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