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## **AN ANALYSIS OF LIMITED MARITIME WAR**

A thesis written by  
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### **INTRODUCTION**

Limited maritime war is a promising area for investigation for two reasons. First, it is one of the two major nonstrategic-nuclear war scenarios upon which the naval planning of the United States is based. Less than two years ago the Secretary of the Navy stated:

I have long held the view that a likely retaliation on the part of the United States to a non-mortal probe by an adversary might very well be the use of selective naval countermeasures. This could easily lead to a war at sea, with sanctuary ashore on both sides . . .<sup>1</sup>

Second, and somewhat surprisingly, within the volumes of studies and analyses produced by the Defense Department and its contractual research organizations the author was unable to locate any material which investigated the likelihood of such a conflict occurring.

It was thought-provoking that several significant capabilities analyses were developed assuming a limited maritime war environment in the scenario, yet no one had investigated the validity of the assumption. Of course, there are inhibiting factors to such an investigation. Prognoses about the nature of future wars are highly speculative at best, but are even more so when considering a very specific and, to date, unprecedented type of warfare. Also, the realization is present that if a nation is prepared to fight a limited war at sea observing the land as a sanctuary, then that nation is equally able to fight the more likely conflict in which strikes at the

enemy's supporting bases and industry ashore lend considerable effectiveness to the battle at sea. Inhibitions notwithstanding, it is possible to investigate many factors which might influence the likelihood of limited maritime war, and, hopefully, it will be profitable to do so because an understanding of these factors, while assuredly not exposing the future to our scrutiny, will provide a reference by which to evaluate present events as they pertain to limited maritime warfare.

Thus, it is the purpose of this paper to analyze limited maritime war as one possibility in the spectrum of potential conflict between the Western powers and the Soviet Union, in order to determine the present likelihood of such a conflict and to illuminate the factors that are significant in evaluating the likelihood of this form of warfare in the future.

The likelihood of a conflict occurring in any particular form is in a great part determined by the evaluation the participating national leadership places upon that form of conflict being capable of achieving the specific objectives of national strategy that are in contention. One way to arrive at such an evaluation is to apply the familiar tests of suitability, feasibility, and acceptability. To be suitable a successful conflict must, of itself, accomplish the desired objectives. A feasible conflict is one in which the forces and support available are sufficient to overcome reasonable expectations of enemy opposition. A conflict is acceptable if the value of the objectives gained exceeds the estimated cost of attaining the objectives.

This thesis is supported by one assumption. That is, limited maritime war is a suitable, feasible, and acceptable means for the Western powers, specifically the United States, to obtain limited objectives in the continuing confrontation with Soviet expansive aims. This assumption in itself might properly be made the subject of an analysis. However, the basis for it is presented briefly in this introduction as follows: Limited maritime warfare is suitable because the foundation of the whole Western alliance rests on sea power. Ocean lines of communication provide the means for the economic activity that makes the alliance prosper and the military power that makes it secure. A limited conflict at sea is feasible because Western naval power, centered in the U.S. Navy, is the most powerful naval force in the world and as such is capable of a rapid and

appropriate application of force over a broad range of contingencies. Limited maritime war is acceptable because any threat to Western control of the sea is so inimical to the vital interests of the free world that the acceptable costs would nearly equal those of national survival itself.

Accordingly, it remains to investigate on a similar basis the likelihood of the historically land-oriented Soviet Union becoming involved in a limited maritime war. The first chapter considers the general concept of limited war in order to provide a common basis for the chapters that follow. A definition of limited war is adopted, and the concept is analyzed by investigating the purpose and means for limiting war and discussing the advantages and disadvantages of such limitations. Chapter II deals with the suitability of limited maritime war to the Soviet Union by tracing the development of present Soviet national strategy and examining the present manifestations of that strategy that pertain to sea-power. Chapter III is concerned with the feasibility of the Soviet Navy engaging in limited maritime war. Present naval doctrine is discussed and speculations are made about the capabilities of the navy in this type of conflict. Chapter IV analyzes the acceptability of limited maritime war to the Soviets by investigating the advantages and disadvantages of such a conflict to any participant and then comparing the inducements and constraints particular to the Soviet Union. The last chapter presents a brief summary and conclusions.

## I-LIMITED WAR THEORY

Purpose. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief analysis of the significant factors of limited war theory in order to establish a common reference point for the material presented in later chapters. Concepts of limited war, published and private, expert and amateur, are of such multitude and diversity that any treatment of the subject without the theoretical benchmarks this chapter intends to provide would tend to generalize to the point of meaninglessness.

A Definition of Limited War. The official military definition of limited war as, "Armed conflict short of general war, exclusive of incidents, involving the overt engagement of the military forces of two or more nations,"<sup>1</sup> leads to the conclusion

that all wars have been limited,<sup>2</sup> failing to differentiate between those conflicts which have been limited by the capabilities of the belligerents and those limited by their intent.

On the other hand, to restrict the concept to local tactical operations whose success or failure is determined on the battlefield is to fail to take into account the particular political realities of our times. As one theorist points out:

. . . a limited war in which we and the Soviets are interested is strategic and global in its motives, objectives, and consequences, no matter how localized the violence may be geographically. The principal motive . . . is likely to be to impress on the adversary an appreciation of one's own intentions, resolves, capabilities, and modes of reaction. Also important is to impress the same on the rest of the world (and even, perhaps, on oneself). The main consequences of any limited conflict are in the expectations that they create in the minds of national leaders about how other nations will behave.<sup>3</sup>

Because it is within the present potential of the major powers to jeopardize each other's national survival, it is not purposeful to consider war which is limited by the lack of capability to expand it. As one widely read theorist has stated: "For purposes of present strategy it is clear that no major power will be forced to adopt a strategy of limited objectives because of insufficient resources. With modern weapons, a limited war becomes an act of policy, not of necessity."<sup>4</sup>

Neither is it purposeful to consider only the military aspects, for that would remove the study from the context of the present world situation. Within these parameters, it seems appropriate to this analysis to adopt as the definition of limited war one in which, "nonmilitary restraints significantly limit the area of conflict, the weapon and force mixture used, and the selection of military objectives and targets."<sup>5</sup>

The Restraint of Political Objectives. The ability to wage war, if considered properly as one item in the inventory of national power, is only a

means to attain national objectives, and as such is subordinate to the ends of national policy. This subordination to policy imposes certain restraints on the methods used in waging war effectively. It has been said that "a limited war . . . is fought for specific political objectives which by their very existence tend to establish a relationship between the force employed and the goal to be obtained."<sup>6</sup> In the past this relationship has not always been understood, in part accounting for the great sense of national frustration during the Korean conflict.

However, subordination of methods to objectives is essential if limited war is to have any real meaning as a strategy, for "the whole conduct of warfare --its strategy, its tactics, its termination--must be governed by the nature of a nation's political objectives and not by independent standards of military success or glory."<sup>7</sup> Put another way, "the first requirement for a limited war . . . is a limited, well-defined political objective attainable by limited military strength."<sup>8</sup>

The Limitation of Means. There are three parameters of conflict which may be significantly restrained in limited war; geography, weapons, and targets. Geography is significant because national boundaries, while in many cases artificial, are a very real entity in the national psyche and, as such, offer readily identifiable limits which, either observed or transgressed, give strong indications of a belligerent's intentions to expand the conflict.

Once a national boundary is crossed it is difficult for the country violated not to believe its security is ultimately threatened. Unless there is some major natural barrier within its borders to serve as a likely limit of expansive aims, there is no other conclusion to draw. This consideration has caused one strategist to observe, "A war not fought within well-defined geographical limits would probably pose such a threat to American and Russian security that both powers would be compelled to strike at the center of opposition."<sup>9</sup> Political boundaries are not the only geographical limits of significance. Natural barriers have been mentioned and among these the dividing line between land and sea is important with respect to this paper.

The restraint of weapons limitations is the crux of the contemporary strategic debate, the argument revolving around the use of nuclear weapons.

Can a limited war in which nuclear weapons are employed remain limited? It is not within the scope of this paper to speculate about this question. It is sufficient to note that theorists on both sides of the debate admit that the introduction of nuclear weapons into a limited war would seriously increase the likelihood of escalation into general war. Although the destructive effects of heavy high explosives overlap low yield nuclear weapons, "what makes atomic weapons different is a powerful conviction that they *are* different."<sup>10</sup> The same reasoning applies to other weapons, toxic agents for example. The precedents and conventions built up around a weapon carry more meaning in war limitation than does the actual destructive capacity.

Limitations on targets is another prominent indicator of the quality of the war. Avoidance of cities, ships at sea, the creation of any one of the many conceivable sanctuaries provide an easily-communicated method of expressing the objective limits of the belligerents.

Some general statements may be made about restraints on geography, weapons, and targets. Any restraint constituting a limitation establishes with it a precedent for the continued observance of that particular limitation. Thus, when the limitation is violated the escalative effect of that violation is far out of proportion to what it would have been had not the restraint been observed in the first place. Lastly, it can be noted that ". . . the scope and method of the initial attack will tend to define the minimum limits of the ensuing conflict and the possibilities of controlling it."<sup>11</sup>

The Requirements of Limited War Strategy.  
Speaking of conditions presupposed by a limited war policy, one author lists three:

. . . the ability to generate pressures other than the threat of all-out war; the ability to create a climate in which survival is not thought to be at stake in each issue; and the ability to keep control of public opinion in case a disagreement arises over whether national survival is at stake. The first condition depends to a considerable extent on the flexibility of our military policy; the second on subtlety in our diplomacy; the third will reflect the courage of our leadership.<sup>12</sup>

The flexibility of a nation's military policy implies the appropriate forces to support that policy, and this includes the forces necessary to deter general war as well as those necessary for fighting limited war. One military commentator has noted, ". . . the first requirement for keeping a limited war limited is, ironically, the capability of extending it."<sup>13</sup>

Secondly, limited war policy requires an active diplomatic effort in order to make objectives clear to the enemy, to discourage escalation by providing him an acceptable avenue of withdrawal, and to negotiate a settlement on the basis of limited objectives. Finally, there is a demand upon the national leadership to continually state the limited nature of these objectives in an effort to eliminate, or at least reduce, public disillusionment and frustration in the absence of total military victory.

#### Constraints in Adopting a Limited War Strategy.

In examining reasons why a policy of limited war is difficult to adopt, three appear significant: escalation, the national character, and costs. The observation has been made that "the chief problem of limited war today is the problem of finding sanctions for keeping out of action, on a stable basis, just those existing instruments which from a strictly military point of view are far the most efficient."<sup>14</sup> This consideration of escalation is directed principally at weapons and as such is equivalent to the previously mentioned and presently unresolved debate on nuclear weapons employment in limited war.

Regarding the constraint of national character, this section addresses itself to the character of democratic people, specifically Americans. In this respect, the public of the United States makes moral and emotional commitments to its national policies and demands that the government reflects its sentiments. Consequently:

. . . once the public has invested its emotional and moral capital in a particular position, it is reluctant to withdraw it--especially if it is tantamount to defeat--even though the investment proves a bad one from an objective standpoint. These democratic propensities are especially strong when the people's spiritual commitment to their nation is heightened by the stress of war.<sup>15</sup>



Also contained within the character of the American people is the specific tradition behind the military establishment of defeating the enemy as quickly and as decisively as possible. In fighting wars restrained by political objectives, the force imposed by this tradition must be constantly held in check.

Finally, the cost of a limited war policy is high. Sizeable general purpose forces are required in addition to strategic nuclear deterrent forces. Loss ratios may be high because limited war is not necessarily fought in the most militarily efficient manner.

The History of Limited War Strategy. In presenting a survey of strategic thinking in the United States during the 20 years since World War II, one military strategist commenced with this observation:

The prevailing strategic concept of that first decade had been that in the event of war with the Soviet Union, the only available and in fact the only thinkable strategy for the United States was to attack immediately with its nuclear weapons, carried in long range bombers, the war-related industrial resources of the enemy, mostly gathered in the latter's cities.<sup>16</sup>

This doctrine of massive retaliation, at first unnamed, later economically streamlined and called the new look, prevailed until 1961 and the advent of the Kennedy Administration. The limited war fought in Korea was considered an aberration, "the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, with the wrong enemy," according to Gen. Omar Bradley.<sup>17</sup>

Secretary Dulles' so-called massive retaliation speech was designed as a warning to our enemies that we would not let the Korean war set the pattern for future conflicts, and that such restraint could not be relied upon in the future. It was in reaction to this publicly announced doctrine and the proven Russian thermonuclear capability that the first statements of opposition became audible. Early criticism came from the political opposition through statements by Adlai Stevenson and Dean Acheson.<sup>18</sup> Speaking of the same period, Gen. Maxwell Taylor mentions articles from sources outside the government

that represented the first public questioning of massive retaliation doctrine.<sup>19</sup> Critics commented on our inability to deter smaller aggressions and advocated a policy of maintaining a military force capable of fighting limited wars.

These voices in concert with some of our senior military leaders gained headway and received tremendous impetus from the Kennedy Administration. Thus, in the mid-1960's the policy of graduated deterrence, the ability to deter by threat of limited war as well as general war, is our present policy, and forces are tailored to fit such a policy. Bernard Brodie sums up the evolution of limited war theory by saying:

These reasons are sufficient to explain why serious thinking about limited war had to await the coming of the large thermonuclear bomb--besides the obvious reason that the basic patterns of thinking, and certainly of political and diplomatic behavior, always change slowly.<sup>20</sup>

#### The Attractiveness of a Limited War Strategy.

The ability to wage limited war is desirable because it ties military means into closer harmony with political objectives. It "maximizes the opportunities for effective use of military force as a rational instrument of national policy."<sup>21</sup> It provides an alternative by which a nation may actively pursue its national interests without invoking threats of general war, which, if used as an exclusive deterrent, becomes either ignored as a bluff or turns every dispute into a question of national prestige and honor, making concessions even more unlikely.

A limited war strategy is further justified in that the general purpose forces necessary to its conduct may spell the difference between defeat and victory in general war. In addition, by adopting such a strategy an industrial nation takes advantage of its productive might, scientific technology, and resource base. In general war, these would be destroyed or significantly reduced in capability.

Summary. Limited war is defined as a conflict in which nonmilitary restraints significantly limit the area of conflict, the weapon and force mixture used, and the selection of military objectives and targets. The essence of limited warfare is the subordination of military means to political objectives.

An effective limited war strategy requires a flexible military policy with the balanced forces necessary to support this policy, active diplomatic effort, and the control of public opinion. Constraints in adopting a limited war strategy are the possibility of escalation, the national character, and costs. However, a limited war strategy is desirable because it renders military force a rational instrument of national policy.

## II--THE SUITABILITY OF LIMITED MARITIME WAR

Purpose. The purpose of this chapter is to define the concept of limited maritime war as used in this paper and to investigate the development and manifestations of present Soviet national strategy as it relates to sea power in order to determine the suitability of limited maritime war from the Soviet viewpoint.

Definition. The concept of limited maritime warfare is defined as a limited war in which military engagements between the major powers are geographically confined to the sea and targets are limited to those elements of enemy power borne upon the sea. Consistent with the definition of limited war adopted in the previous chapter, these limitations are imposed by nonmilitary restraints resulting from limited political objectives. This definition does not preclude the involvement of any one of the belligerents in some type of sub-limited conflict on land, but does exclude a concurrent land war among the major powers.

The spectrum of conflict envisaged in limited maritime warfare ranges from simple harassment involving the already recorded interference with fleet operations,<sup>1</sup> cable cuttings, and deprivation of innocent passage and canal rights, to blockade, covert submarine warfare, and overt engagements between major naval units.

The Development of Present Soviet National Strategy. The fact that the long range goal of expanding communism throughout the world has not changed since the first Soviet Congress in 1919 is as decided as it is fundamental. It is also clear that the forces that determine national strategy--geography, economics, and politics--have altered the set and drift of this expansionist current more than once. The synthesis of these two observations has

been termed by one authority as the fundamental objective of Soviet strategy, that is, "advance the power of the Soviet Union in whatever ways are most expedient so long as the survival of the Soviet power itself is not endangered."<sup>2</sup>

This pragmatism in national strategy has been most pointedly demonstrated during the past two decades by the transformation in emphasis of that strategy from one of peripheral probings and diplomatic recalcitrance toward the West to one of economic competition and expanding political activity with the dual aim of undermining the power of the Western alliance and capturing control of the politically uncommitted areas of the world. This change was not abrupt but evolved over the span of international events from 1945 to the present. There are five principal reasons for this strategic mutation.

The first was the unified opposition of the free world under the leadership of the United States to Soviet encroachments in Europe, Korea, and the Middle East. After an initial postwar reaction of withdrawal and isolationism by the United States,<sup>3</sup> policies such as the Marshall Plan, the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, firmness in the several Berlin crises, the Korean conflict, and, most recently, the Cuban missile crisis, have slowly led Soviet leaders to the realization that overt thrusts and pressure on their part have achieved little success in areas where the West had both the means and the interest to oppose them. The contrary effect was more often evident, that of unifying the West into economic and military agreements designed to contain Soviet activity. By 1953 there were few nations on the periphery of the Soviet bloc whose security was not formally dependent upon the power of the United States.

The second reason was the change in Soviet leadership subsequent to the death of Stalin in 1953. Stalin was a revolutionary who thought in ideological terms of the inevitable military clash between the Communist and non-Communist camps which would mark the final crushing blow to capitalism.<sup>4</sup> Khrushchev and his successors are economists who are firmly convinced of the innate ability of the Communist system to destroy capitalism by peaceful economic competition. In 1959 Khrushchev stated:

Let us show our goods, and let the world decide which is the better system. Obviously the most progressive and lasting is the one which insures to every man and woman the greater amount of material goods, the better working and living conditions, the more opportunities for their spiritual development. People everywhere will make the right choice, and they will do it without being forced by a new war and the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>5</sup>

This revision of Stalinism was evidenced in ways other than theoretical pronouncements. The very real de-Stalinization of the Soviet Union, apparently prompted by domestic political considerations, led to relatively increased freedom and awareness on the part of the Russian people. This new awareness had economic consequences illustrated by an incipient desire for consumer production which, when coupled with continued high production goals in heavy industry, necessitated increased international economic activity.<sup>6</sup> Increased foreign trade had the complementary effect of providing a legitimate means to spread Soviet influence and support indigenous subversive movements.

A third reason for the Soviet strategic shift was their development of thermonuclear weapons and the missile systems associated with the nuclear stalemate. Concurrent with the construction and testing of the hydrogen bomb in 1953 some Soviet leaders implied that:

. . . neither the Soviet Union or the U.S.A. would risk such destruction, and both sides could therefore manoeuvre *within* the limits of global warfare, which would enable the Soviet government to readjust Russia's internal economy, and if necessary to use her armed forces in limited warfare.<sup>7</sup>

While this viewpoint was not officially accepted nor soon reflected in such practical matters as Soviet force structures, the new concept persisted to the point that by 1960 it was clear that the Soviets had almost adapted to the strategic implications of nuclear parity.<sup>8</sup>

A less obvious but equally important outgrowth of Soviet achievement in weaponry was to partially

offset the defects of geography and climate which has always plagued the extension of Soviet power.<sup>9</sup> Soviet force could now be projected through the atmosphere at supersonic speed to any point on earth, thereby diminishing the need to open traditional paths to the sea. Adapting this view to the Cuban missile crisis, Khrushchev rationalized:

Certain people depict the matter thus: that we placed missiles for an attack on the U.S. This, of course, is not sensible reasoning. Why would it be necessary for us to place missiles in Cuba for this purpose when we had and have the capability to deliver a strike from our own territory, having the necessary number of inter-continental missiles, of the necessary range and power? We have as a matter of fact no need for military bases on foreign territory.<sup>10</sup>

A fourth factor was the tendency toward polycentrism, particularly exemplified by the Sino-Soviet split. It can be convincingly argued that the rift between these two powers was the result of Soviet shifts in strategy (among other elements) rather than the cause of these moves.<sup>11</sup> However, it can also be argued that with such a truculent neighbor on her eastern flank, the Soviet Union would have been forced into a policy of disengagement in Europe regardless of other considerations. The resurgence of Poland as a national entity and the revolt in Hungary had a similar contracting effect on Soviet strategy at an earlier period. The effect of the Sino-Soviet rupture is to hold Russia committed to a policy which for other reasons was desirable, but may not necessarily remain so. In this respect Soviet flexibility has been limited.

The final factor was the emergence of the underdeveloped nations as a third force in international affairs. Thus, at precisely the time when events, both international and domestic, indicated the necessity of Soviet economic and ideological expansion by new means and in untried directions, whole areas of the world, rich in resources, economically dependent, politically immature, and nonaligned, became available for Communist exploitation and subversion. Some would see this Soviet projection into these areas as the inevitable flow of geopolitics, because:

. . . if Soviet Russia is to make real progress towards world domination, she must not only extend her influence on this land mass Eurasia, but also must become master of Mackinder's 'World Ocean' whose symbolic centre is at Sydney, Australia. Thus the line joining Moscow and Sydney broadly represents the axis along which the Soviet-controlled bloc must spread its influence if it is to dominate the world.<sup>12</sup>

Preordained or not, it is apparent that the present course of Soviet strategy is the product of the effect of the interrelationship of these five factors acting upon fundamental Soviet goals.

Confronted with containment on the flanks and polycentrism within the bloc, yet relatively more secure under the umbrella of mutual deterrence and tactically less dependent on the imperatives of ideology and geography, it is clear that the Soviets have elected to overtake the West economically and politically by capturing the markets and capitals of the world's uncommitted and underdeveloped nations, a course which of necessity leads down to the sea.

In 1955 the total amount of Soviet foreign trade turnover (imports and exports) with underdeveloped nations amounted to \$322.8 million. By 1963 this trade volume had increased nearly fivefold to \$1,435.2 million.<sup>13</sup> Of the almost 50 nations engaged in this trade in 1963, only three have a common boundary with the Soviet Union. All but five are directly accessible by sea. The implication of these facts was stated explicitly by one authority during a speech warning of the Soviet challenge at sea; ". . . with any further expansion, the Communists must move into those areas which are directly influenced by sea power."<sup>14</sup> Have the Russians in fact accepted the challenge that their strategy dictates?

It was Mahan who taught us that the term 'sea power' did not mean simply navies alone. It means the sum total of all those factors which enable a nation to utilize the sea in the pursuit of its objectives. Thus, it includes naval and merchant ships, seaports and bases, overseas trade, and an interest in the sea on the part of the government and the people.<sup>15</sup>

The Merchant Marine. Regarding the merchant marine, the evidence is abundant that the Soviets have indeed accepted the challenge of their strategy. As an expert on merchant marine affairs pointed out after a recent visit to the Soviet Union:

The precise amounts expended for ship procurement in non-Communist countries . . . seems to fall in the range of \$100,000,000 to \$150,000,000 per annum. Commitment of these important resources of foreign exchange\* is striking evidence of Soviet determination to become an important, perhaps a dominant power, on the sea trades of the world.

Aside from military considerations, other factors which are involved in the determination of the Soviet Union to expand its maritime establishment are: the desire to maintain the presence of Soviet ships in the ports and on the sea lanes of the world; the leapfrogging of Soviet interests from contiguous land masses to areas which are reliant on sea transport, i.e., Cuba, Indonesia, Ceylon, the United Arab Republic, India, and others; the need to minimize their present extreme reliance on chartered Free World tonnage; and the desire to conserve foreign exchange by shipping foreign trade in Soviet bottoms.<sup>16</sup>

Available statistics on the growth of the Soviet merchant marine and foreign trade bear out this contention. In 1955 the merchant fleet consisted of 604 ships totaling 2.4 million deadweight tons. By 1965 this figure had soared to 1,746 ships totaling 9.9 million tons. Goals for 1980 set by the 22nd Communist Party Congress will, if reached, expand the fleet to 4,365 ships of a total tonnage of 27.2 million.<sup>17</sup>

The U.S.S.R. shipbuilding industry is expanding concurrently with the merchant marine, with about 40 per cent of future tonnage requirements scheduled for production in Soviet yards.<sup>18</sup> However, there is still a requirement for the production of seven to eight hundred thousand tons annually in foreign yards, primarily in bloc countries, but with heavy orders also in Japan, Italy, and the Scandinavian countries.<sup>19</sup> Soviet shipbuilding technology is keeping



pace with capacity. "While the Soviet Union is currently emphasizing shipboard automation and modern cargo handling gear, it is extremely active, and may well be ahead of the Free-World nations, in the design and experimentation of gas turbines and hydrofoils."<sup>20</sup>

This growing fleet has enabled the Soviet Union by 1965 to establish trade relations with 91 countries,<sup>21</sup> including relatively high volumes of trade with India, U.A.R., Algeria, Ceylon, Cuba, Indonesia, and Ghana. The use of the merchant marine as an instrument of political activity in these and other areas of the world is well documented. As early as 1954 the Soviets sent approximately 2,000 tons of Czech arms to the pro-Communist government in Guatemala. Since that time they have sent nearly a billion dollars worth of military assistance to non-contiguous countries.<sup>22</sup> The Cuban missile crisis was the most volatile example of Soviet military penetration through the unhampered facilities of its merchant marine. One government study has stated, "There is evidently no dearth of opportunities for Soviet political operatives to employ the country's merchant ships for carrying military weapons and related cargoes to various destinations . . . for the purpose of helping to initiate or maintain prolonged civil wars."<sup>23</sup>

The economic effect of the Soviet merchant fleet is being felt in world shipping circles. As the fleet grows, more Russian cargo can be carried in its own bottoms and more ships enter the world freight market--at depressed rates<sup>24</sup>--for charter to other trading nations. Both factors contribute to an international economic position favorable to the Soviets. Some nations have already been forced to reduce certain maritime operations because of Russian competition.<sup>25</sup> As one observer sees the threat:

The pattern of state-subsidized shipping undercutting that operating under free enterprise is all too familiar, and unfortunately there is ample room for such operations. The new self-governing states in Africa afford opportunities for breaking into markets hitherto denied to Russia. South America is another target of Communist infiltration and here again ships offer an effective means of gaining and maintaining contact. . . . It would seem

that the Soviet merchant marine is being expanded for use as an instrument in the relentless prosecution of the Cold War.<sup>26</sup>

Overseas Bases. Khrushchev's disclaimer of interest in foreign bases notwithstanding,<sup>27</sup> Soviet activity in this area has been expanding to the extent that one publicist cites the establishment of Soviet advance bases in North Vietnam and North Korea, an island research station in the Indonesian Archipelago, and the assistance to Iran in the construction of a harbor near Abadan as singular indications of the advancing sea power aims of the Kremlin.<sup>28</sup> In early 1965 facilities to be staffed by Soviet technicians for the maintenance and repair of vessels were near completion at the Ghanian port of Tema.<sup>29</sup> Soviet assistance in the construction of a large fishing port in Havana Bay required a Cuban commitment to service Russian trawlers for at least 10 years.<sup>30</sup> The size of these activities is small when compared to the naval complexes the United States maintains throughout the world, but the opportunity and incentive for continued development of overseas bases designed to serve the specific characteristics of Soviet sea power is large.

Domestic Ports and Inland Waterways. The expansion of port facilities within the Soviet Union is lagging behind increases in ship construction and trade. One witness reports that "even moderate increases in the volume of general cargo movements will tax these ports [Leningrad, Odessa, and Novorossiysk, cited as the best] to their capacity."<sup>31</sup> Yet, even in this area the Soviets have not been idle. High priority has been given to the improvement of satellite ports such as Stettin and Rostok on the Baltic Sea, with the latter designated to receive most of the Czechoslovakian traffic now routed through the Western port of Hamburg.<sup>32</sup> Large scale programs for the expansion and modernization of Russia's inland waterway system are also in evidence. One canal in progress linking the Neman and Dnieper rivers will cut the distance of the water route between the Baltic and Black seas to 1,440 miles.<sup>33</sup>

Foreign Trade--the Oil Offensive. Previous mention has been made of the relationship between expanding foreign trade and the strategic shift toward economic competition with the West.<sup>34</sup> However, total trade volume does not tell the complete story. First, it is significant to note that of the 66 per cent increase in total Soviet trade during the 1959-1963

period, trade with the bloc countries increased 58 per cent, while trade with nations outside the bloc increased 88 per cent.<sup>35</sup> Secondly, statistics on one commodity, oil, reveal how the Soviet Union uses expanding production and captive markets as weapons in their economic offensive.

During the period 1955-1963 Soviet crude oil production nearly tripled from 70.8 million metric tons to 206.1 million.<sup>36</sup> By selling part of this excess crude oil to the bloc nations of eastern Europe at a premium, the Soviets are able to subsidize the price of the remainder on the open market.<sup>37</sup> Many non-Communist countries now fulfill a large percentage of their requirements with Soviet imports.<sup>38</sup> The National Petroleum Council estimates that in 1961 the loss to Middle East and Venezuelan producers amounted to \$145 million.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the Soviet trade offensive, made possible by sea power, continues to disrupt the traditional patterns of the world's markets and creates economic levers necessary for power politics.

Maritime Interests. The best way to determine if a government or its people have an interest in the sea is by studying their ocean-related activities. Regardless of historical surveys or psychological analyses of national character, if a nation is actively engaged in a large scale scientific and economic exploitation of the ocean that nation is interested in the sea. A student of Soviet oceanographic efforts has observed:

The Soviet Union . . . has every intention of competing with the United States in the area of interest. In its quest for world domination through political, economic, military, scientific, and psychological means the Soviet Union must necessarily place increasing emphasis on attaining mastery of the world's oceans. The knowledge which it is developing about the expanses, depths, floor, and dynamics of the sea is still one more danger signal of the serious military and economic threat which it poses to the free world.<sup>40</sup>

Today there are over 4,000 people engaged in oceanographic studies in the Soviet Union. These people are served by nearly 100 oceanographic vessels. The major effort of this scientific task force is

directed toward practical applications such as the Soviet fishing industry,<sup>41</sup> which has increased dramatically since the end of World War II. Illustrating the measure of this growth, between 1948 and 1963 the annual fish catch nearly tripled, salt fish production rose fivefold, fish meal production increased by a factor of ten, and the whale catch grew over five times.<sup>42</sup> It was estimated that 78 per cent of the total catch in 1965 would be taken in open ocean areas.<sup>43</sup>

Russia regularly maintains a fleet of 200 to 400 fishing vessels off Grand and Georges Banks. More than a dozen *Okean* class trawlers ply regularly between the Banks and Cuba, often transiting long stretches of the east coast of Florida within U.S. territorial waters.<sup>44</sup> In fact, the Soviet fishing fleet has ". . . extended its activities to almost all known fishing grounds, down to South Africa and the Antarctic Sea."<sup>45</sup> There is sufficient objective evidence that the Soviet Union is indeed interested in the sea.

As this interest and activity continue to grow, the potential for conflict inherent in the present international situation has already expanded to the world's oceans. It has been noted that:

In this age of missiles and satellites, the first major showdown between the Soviet Union and the United States took place at sea during the Cuban crisis. This was the first time that American had faced Russian, without third parties such as satellite countries involved. As an omen of things to come, this confrontation took place on the high seas.<sup>46</sup>

Summary. Limited maritime warfare is defined as a conflict in which the military engagements between the major powers are geographically confined to the sea, and targets are limited to those elements of enemy power borne upon the sea.

The effects of politics, economics, and geography upon ultimate Soviet national goals have dictated a new strategy of economic competition with the West and political expansion in the uncommitted areas of the world. There are five principal reasons for this change: the containment policy of the Western alliance, the change in Soviet leadership,

the development of nuclear parity, polycentrism within the Communist bloc, and the emergence of the underdeveloped nations.

The Soviets realize that this strategy is dependent on the elements of sea power for its execution. The recent expansion of the Soviet merchant marine, greatly increased foreign trade, attempts at establishing advanced overseas bases, development of domestic ports and inland waterways, and a major interest in the scientific and economic exploitation of ocean resources indicate that the Soviets have grasped the implications of their strategy and are actively committed to the pursuit of sea power. It is concluded that a limited maritime war would be suitable to Soviet national objectives.

### III—THE FEASIBILITY OF LIMITED MARITIME WAR

Purpose. Given the suitability of limited maritime war to the Soviet Union, it is the purpose of this chapter to investigate present Soviet naval doctrine and forces and to speculate on the capability of the Russian Navy to fight a limited war at sea, in order to determine the feasibility of such a conflict.

Soviet Naval Doctrine. Logically, naval doctrine should develop within the context of national objectives and means; forces are then shaped to implement this doctrine. There is, however, disagreement among Western observers concerning the consistency of Soviet naval doctrine and the composition of the Red Navy relative to national strategy.

Few publicists have failed to note Soviet expansion into areas served by sea power. The point in dispute is the intent and capability of the Red Navy to support the bid for control of the seas implicit in the new strategy. Of the writers who see new directions in Soviet naval doctrine, most hold the offensive submarine force with its increasingly far-reaching areas of operations as the significant illustration of Russia's military entry into the contest for the sea. For example:

The Russian Navy's gradual extension toward worldwide operations, going far beyond its traditional defensive deployment close to Russia, is made evident by recent movements of its submarines.

In addition to their activities in the Bering and Black seas, as in the past, they are now moving freely in the Mediterranean and the Norwegian and Philippine seas.<sup>1</sup>

Some look upon the armament characteristics of new surface ship construction as evidence of revised naval strategy.<sup>2</sup> Still others see the Soviet mine-laying potential as marking a challenge to Western sea power.<sup>3</sup>

Commander Herrick's dissertation, the most comprehensive treatment of Soviet naval strategy available, takes up the issue in this manner:

. . . far too much of the thinking and writing on Soviet strategy by American and British naval officers, and practically all of the articles by journalists and armchair strategists, miss the mark badly by over-emphasizing the Soviet Navy's offensive capabilities at the expense of the defensive ones. They do this by assuming that, because the Soviet Navy is now second in tonnage only to the United States Navy and has made a considerable application of nuclear propulsion to its submarines and of nuclear missiles to its submarines, surface ships, and naval aircraft, it is basically the same kind of strategically offensive instrument of power as the U.S. and British navies. This erroneous assumption has lead [sic] to a large outpouring of misleading articles portraying the Soviet Navy as essentially a strategically offensive force, a blue-water, high seas fleet. Such descriptions almost invariably convey the incorrect impression that the Soviet Navy has a major capability for actually contesting with the NATO navies for command of the sea.<sup>4</sup>

The author further points out that the reason the Soviet Navy cannot contest command of the sea is the limitations imposed by their singular reliance on land-based aviation for aerial protection of their surface forces,<sup>5</sup> and that submarine forces, while potentially capable of denying sea-borne communications to the West, cannot exercise command of the sea because they cannot assure free use of the seas to

their own surfaces forces.<sup>6</sup> Thus, ". . . the multiplying merchant ships of the Soviet merchant marine just become *so many hostages* to our naval forces . . ."<sup>7</sup>

The most recent authoritative article on Soviet naval doctrine was written by Marshal Sokolovskii, editor of *Military Strategy*, who stated:

. . . equipping our Navy with atomic submarines with missiles, and with missile aviation of long range and nuclear weapons, permits a shift from carrying out wartime missions along the coast in cooperation with Ground Troops to independent and decisive operations on the broad reaches of the oceans.<sup>8</sup>

Commander Herrick regards statements like this as propaganda efforts to offset the Soviets' own acute realization that they are vastly inferior to the West in naval power and have little chance for attaining equality.<sup>9</sup>

Accepting Commander Herrick's views as authoritative, it is necessary to regard their limitations within the context of this paper. The Soviets almost exclusively theorize in terms of general nuclear war with the West, and Commander Herrick has quite properly analyzed the naval threat in terms of ultimate military command of the sea so vital in general protracted conflict. However, in speculating about a conflict in which the main thrust is economic, political, and psychological, and the military means are restrained by limited objectives, it seems the Red Navy poses a major threat potentially capable of attaining such objectives.

Soviet Naval Capabilities in Limited Maritime War. By far the greatest emphasis within the Soviet Fleet is placed on submarines.<sup>10</sup> These have the largest naval role in general war.<sup>11</sup> It would be natural then for the Soviets to also assign them the major role in a limited sea war. Covert torpedo attacks on isolated Western surface units could be an effective tactic and, if done properly, a politically disconcerting maneuver, the responsibility easily denied and next to impossible to prove. Another covert tactic could be the offensive mining by submarine of key shipping bottlenecks such as the Straits of Malacca, the Gulf of Suez,<sup>12</sup> or possibly

special tactical zones similar to current operating areas in the South China Sea. Submarine blockade of selected areas might prove a more overt but equally effective method of gaining some limited objective, the costs of instituting a protective convoy system outweighing the value of the objective threatened.

Soviet surface forces<sup>13</sup> are capable of conducting raider operations within the limits of land-based air protection and could conceivably foray beyond their air cover for selected strikes at isolated merchant ships. High speed guided missile boats and motor gun boats operating from advanced bases could utilize hit-and-run tactics to harass fishing trawlers and other small commercial craft. Surface forces could also blockade the approaches to the Sea of Japan, the Skagerrak, or the northern entrance to the Suez Canal, areas within range of Soviet land-based aviation.

The wide-ranging Soviet merchant marine and trawler fleet are also capable of limited hot war activities. Active electronic countermeasures, covert minelaying, and the transport and positioning of naval saboteurs are some of the possibilities. The primary utilization of these vessels, however, would most likely be advanced area support of submarines and surface combat units.

Another, more overt, aspect of advanced area support is the Soviet attempt to establish control of key islands strategically situated at the world's maritime crossroads.<sup>14</sup> With mixed success the Soviets have attempted to penetrate Cuba, Cyprus, Zanzibar, Ceylon, Indonesia, and Yemen, areas adjacent to and potentially capable of interdicting converging ocean trade routes. The acquisition of control of these areas has been part of the new strategy of peaceful expansion, but the value of these island bases in a war in which land areas are regarded as sanctuaries is immeasurable, to some extent challenging the advantage of mobile carrier forces.

Summary. No available evidence exists that Soviet strategists have considered limited maritime war as a naval strategy, and some controversy is apparent among Western observers concerning the purpose and capabilities of the Soviet Navy. Accepting the view that this force is primarily defensive and secondary in Soviet military thinking, it is still obvious that the Soviet Navy possesses many capabilities, some particularly effective in a



guerrilla-warlike limited maritime conflict. Ambiguous, covert submarine attacks, surface raider operations, covert mining, and trawler supported unconventional warfare activities are all capabilities which render the Soviet Navy a feasible limited maritime war instrument.

#### IV--THE ACCEPTABILITY OF LIMITED MARITIME WAR

Purpose. It has been concluded in previous chapters that it is both suitable and feasible for the Soviet Union to wage a limited maritime war. It remains to compare the advantages and disadvantages, the inducements and constraints to such a conflict in order to determine its acceptability. This is the purpose of this chapter. Before looking at factors germane to the Soviet viewpoint, it is pertinent to examine some considerations common to any participant in a limited war at sea.

Advantages of Limited Maritime War. The sea as an environment for limited war offers several objective advantages to any belligerent. First, the ocean battlefield presents a well-defined geographical area, wherein the conflict may range the whole spectrum of weapons and destruction without directly threatening the land-oriented security of the contestants--a necessary element in the control of limited war.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, the efficient prosecution of land warfare usually involves either deliberate or unavoidable destruction of nonmilitary personnel and property. At best their status is not clear. Thus political and social restraints are raised which tend to complicate control of the conflict. At sea selection of targets is less ambiguous. Unless deceptive measures are used, combat ships are readily distinguishable from other types, and it may be assumed that the warships are manned by naval personnel. The deliberate destruction of nonmilitary vessels and crews would be recognized for exactly that. Confusion over intentions would be minimized and control of the war more easily maintained.

Thirdly, the essence of rational warfare may be said to be the use of only that amount and kind of force necessary to achieve the objective. In that regard, a naval officer has noted that ". . . force is never more ready than when exerted through the great flexibility and mobility of maritime forces on

the high seas. Then diplomacy . . . can . . . achieve national objectives at the lowest level of violence."<sup>2</sup> Naval power can operate ambiguously from beneath the sea, or overtly, opponents testing each other's intentions in a deliberate manner. Ships may exercise force ranging from the traditional shot across the bow to megaton destruction. Yet, at sea the use of nuclear weapons is insulated to some degree by the vastness and relative isolation of the potential target area. An analysis of whether or not this insulation is significant in constraining the pressure of escalation attendant to the use of nuclear weapons is beyond the scope of this paper. It is however, possible to speculate that, considering present emotionalism surrounding the subject of nuclear weapons employment, the consequences of their use will depend less on the circumstances of their use than upon the fact that they were used at all. In fact, it is quite conceivable that their employment would be more escalative at sea than on land due to the fact that the military requirements for the use of nuclear weapons is not as evident at sea. Accordingly, the decision to use them would be considered more arbitrary, hence less justifiable. Nevertheless, it can be concluded at this point that the parameters by which limited war is controlled become more workable in a maritime environment.

Disadvantages of Limited Maritime War. There are also probable constraints against a belligerent using the sea as a limited war battleground. Significant among these is the concept that international waters are a sanctuary. This concept evolved over many cold war conflicts and is a result of practice rather than agreement. In both the Korean and Vietnamese conflicts and during all the crises in between, naval forces in international waters have been sacrosanct. One exception exists to prove the rule. The North Vietnamese motor torpedo boat attack on U.S. destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin in August 1964 provoked an immediate and decisive retaliation.

The foundation of this idea may possibly lie in the belief that each nation in a sense regards the international sea as part of his own sovereignty, hence acts of aggression at sea are in effect acts of aggression against all nations. A corollary to this restraint is the equally inhibiting realization that if nations feel so strongly about the inviolability of the sea, then aggression on international waters would be a highly escalative adventure, more

destabilizing than an equally aggressive thrust on land where the threat is more direct but sensitivity has been dulled by repetition.

Soviet Inducements to a Limited Maritime War.  
Having considered some advantages and disadvantages of limited maritime warfare common to all belligerents, it is necessary to speculate on some specific factors which might induce or restrain the Soviet Union. Three inducements are readily apparent: limited war in general is a type of warfare the Soviets prefer; for the present the West is more vulnerable on the sea than are the Soviets; and the rewards accruing to success are obviously large and appropriate to Soviet national objectives.

Soviet theorizing on war has been almost exclusively concerned with general war and rather rigid in the belief that any armed conflict involving the nuclear powers will inevitably develop into general war.<sup>3</sup> When limited war is mentioned it is to castigate any form but the doctrinally acceptable wars of national liberation.<sup>4</sup> However, Soviet practice does not always agree with their pronouncements, and this is a case in point. History bears witness to the fact that the Soviets have preferred limited war for limited objectives,<sup>5</sup> and in this age of nuclear stalemate it is almost certain that Soviet strategists would attempt to follow a course relatively less menacing to the survival of Soviet power.

Earlier in this paper statistics were quoted which related to Soviet use of the oceans. These statements were significant relative to Soviet advances in sea power, but provided no understanding of the extent of Soviet reliance on the sea in absolute terms. In 1964 Soviet foreign trade turnover was about 35 per cent of the world commerce of the United States in dollar value.<sup>6</sup> In 1960 Soviet maritime transportation carried only seven per cent of the nation's total freight<sup>7</sup> and less than one-fifth of the freight carried by U.S. ships during the same period.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the higher comparative vulnerability of the West to the interdiction of a sea war is apparent. This is a relative advantage for the Soviets and will diminish as their economic offensive continues to flourish.

The most obvious reward attendant to Soviet success in a limited maritime war would be the major step taken toward the achievement of her national objectives of political expansion and the economic

defeat of the West. A Soviet victory at sea would have many possible effects, each varying in degree to the extent the objectives of the conflict were limited. Three appear probable: stress would be created within the Western alliance; the Soviet international economic situation would improve; and the Soviet political position would be enhanced.

Western naval power, primarily embodied in the U.S. and British fleets, plays a major role in containing Soviet expansive thrusts by its demonstrated ability to rapidly project the right amount of power into critical world situations. Less dramatic, but equally important, is the ability of Western naval power to guarantee freedom of the seas, not only to the vital waterborne traffic of the Western alliance, but to the commerce of all nations.

A discrediting of this ability by some degree of failure to control the sea could possibly invoke nations whose security depends on Western naval power to reappraise the benefits of this protection. Serious questions might arise within NATO concerning the security of Atlantic supply lines during a European contingency. The Soviets would have more freedom to operate disruptively in those volatile areas where the national interests of Western nations diverge.

Outside the alliance uncommitted nations would look reflexively to the Soviet Union for maritime guarantees. As a result their seaborne commercial activities would be increasingly subject to Soviet terms. In the hands of the Kremlin this power would be used as an economic lever to induce favorable trade agreements and to effect discriminatory shipping arrangements. In the future, control of ocean resources will become as economically important as the control of naturally productive land areas today.<sup>9</sup> New power could be brought to bear in international disputes over fishing rights. Claims to extended territorial waters might be enforced to the detriment of interests not sympathetic to communism. In general, Soviet economic competition would be characterized by more aggressive tactics.

Any weakening of the Western alliance enhances Russia's political position. Faced by a divided, ineffectual NATO across Western Europe, the Soviets could resume probing at old targets, taking advantage of the likely revitalization of indigenous Communist organizations and the familiar presence of the Red

Army. Elsewhere, new opportunities would no doubt be provided for establishing advanced bases with facilities for both conventional and nuclear warfare. Certainly the Soviet capability to support and eventually control so-called popular revolutions in underdeveloped nations would be enhanced. Success against the West at sea will undoubtedly tend to solidify the Communist bloc, possibly slowing the trend toward polycentrism, and even mollifying the doctrinal recalcitrance of the Communist Chinese.

#### Soviet Constraints to a Limited Maritime War.

The predominant factors which might constrain Soviet limited maritime war strategy are: the economic and military dependence of the West on the sea is so vital that any Soviet objective, no matter how limited, which jeopardized Western rights would be obtained at an extremely high price, probably out of proportion to its value to the Soviets; and in its present strength and composition the Russian fleet is the weakest element of Soviet power--unlike the Red Army, unable to force the West to choose between threats of nuclear response or retreat.

The significance of the first factor is that the value of complete freedom of the sea is so great in Western eyes that a relatively high cost would be accepted to maintain it. The significance of the second factor is that within the limits of maritime warfare the Soviet Navy does not have the means to raise the cost to unacceptable levels, whereas Western naval power is more capable of gaining a decisive victory at sea without resorting to the threat of nuclear reprisals at vital land areas. Thus, the only way the Soviet Union can make limited maritime war an effective and consequently an acceptable action would be to disguise its objectives in a cloak of politics and propaganda, confounding the values of what is being threatened, or become the world's dominant naval power with a full range of offensive capabilities. The latter is an effort requiring great expenditures of time and resources and one which the Soviets have been up to the present unwilling to make.

Summary. The sea offers several advantages as a locale for limited war. The geographical limits are well defined, target selection is less ambiguous than on land, and naval power provides a flexible means of applying the amount and kind of force appropriate to the objective. On the other hand, the disadvantage of a sea war is that through

practice the sea has become somewhat inviolable in the cold war conflicts of the past two decades. A violation of this sanctuary would be highly destabilizing.

The Soviets might possibly be induced to wage limited maritime war because limited war in general is the preferable method of Soviet strategists, the West is more vulnerable to the effects of a sea war than are the Soviets, and payoffs accruing to a successful conflict are large and appropriate to Soviet strategic objectives. However, the vital importance of maritime control to the West and the inability of the Soviet Navy to be ultimately decisive at sea are constraints which could presently render maritime war unacceptable to Soviet leaders.

## V-SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary. A military confrontation between the Western powers and the Soviet Union could develop as one of many types of conflict within the spectrum of modern warfare. One form which has appeared in U.S. naval planning is limited maritime warfare--a war fought wholly at sea, involving only the naval forces of the belligerents and limited to naval targets, in which the land areas of both sides are observed as a sanctuary. An investigation of the elements affecting the suitability, feasibility, and acceptability of such a conflict assists in evaluating the important factors that determine the likelihood of limited maritime war occurring now or in the future. It is assumed that a limited war at sea is suitable, feasible, and acceptable to the Western powers because of the importance of sea power to nearly every vital activity of the alliance. However, the present trend of the Soviet Union toward a maritime orientation is a relatively new phenomenon, and it is from the viewpoint of Soviet sea power that this question must be examined.

Limited war in general is defined as a conflict in which nonmilitary restraints significantly limit the area of conflict, the weapon and force mixture used, and the selection of military objectives and targets. Limited war is a desirable military policy because it rationally subordinates force to political objectives.

Within the two decades following World War II the affects of politics, economics, and geography

have conspired to alter the emphasis of Soviet national strategy from bellicose advances along the periphery of Eurasia to relatively peaceful tactics of economic competition with the West and political expansion in the uncommitted areas of the world. The result of this strategic shift is to render the Soviet Union increasingly reliant on the elements of sea power in the execution of their policies. That they realize this new dependence and are actively pursuing the attributes of a major maritime power is evidenced by their expanding merchant marine and foreign trade, rapid development of maritime facilities both overseas and at home, and the large scale exploitation of ocean resources.

No evidence exists that the Soviet naval strategists have considered limited maritime war as either likely or a desirable form of conflict with the West. In spite of propaganda efforts espousing the contrary, the Soviet Navy is primarily a defensive force with little capability for winning a full scale maritime war against Western naval power. However, it is obvious that the Soviet Navy possesses a significant capability to wage a successful limited war at sea, particularly utilizing guerrilla-like tactics, where the full weight of free world naval power would be somewhat degraded.

The sea as a locale for limited war offers several advantages to any participant. The geographical limits are well-defined. Target selection is less ambiguous. Naval power is a flexible means of applying the appropriate force. The main disadvantage to a sea war is that it would be highly destabilizing because the disruption of normal maritime activity would be extremely detrimental to many nations. Comparing factors which might induce or constrain the Soviet Union to engage in a limited maritime war it is seen that limited war in general is a type of conflict Soviet strategists prefer. The West is presently more vulnerable to the effects of a sea war than are the Soviets. A third inducement is that the rewards attendant to a successful conflict are great and are particularly appropriate to Soviet objectives. The major factors which might inhibit the Soviets are the realization that the interest of the West in maintaining its free exercise of oceanic communication is vital, and that the Soviet Navy is not capable of an ultimately decisive decision at sea.

Conclusions. It is concluded that a limited war at sea is suitable to the Soviet Union because the objectives to be gained would be appropriate to present Soviet national strategy by enhancing their economic position vis-à-vis the West and increasing the opportunity for political exploitation of the underdeveloped nations.

It is concluded that, although the Soviet Navy is primarily a defensive force, and presently not capable of ultimately wresting command of the sea from the West, it possesses capabilities that would be particularly effective in guerrilla-like naval operations which would render limited maritime war feasible to the Soviet Union.

It is further concluded that limited maritime war would be presently unacceptable to the Soviet Union because the high value the West places upon freedom of the seas would raise any maritime conflict to the level which would exceed Soviet potential for success within the restraints of sea warfare.

The final conclusion is that of the many forms of conflict that may develop between the West and the Soviet Union the likelihood of a limited maritime war at present is not predominant. If, however, Soviet national strategy remains unchanged, the significant element in determining the future likelihood of limited maritime war will be the effort made by the Soviet Navy toward attaining a true global offensive capability.



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4. Herrick, p. xii.

5. *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

6. *Ibid.*, p. x.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 166.

8. Vasilii Sokolovskii and M. Cherednichenko, "Military Art in a New Stage," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 28 August 1964. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 95.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

10. "It is estimated that, older and ineffective boats excluded, the Soviet Navy now has a total strength of 30 nuclear powered submarines and 400 conventionally powered submarines. At least 100 submarines, some nuclear powered, some armed with missiles, are estimated to be in the Pacific area." *Jane's Fighting Ships, 1964-1965* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. vii.

11. Vasilii D. Sokolovskii, ed., *Soviet Military Strategy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 420-424.

12. Saar.

13. *Jane's* lists 23 cruisers, 130 destroyers, 90 frigates, 900 minesweepers, 245 escort and patrol vessels, 350 motor torpedo boats, and 550 gunboats and fast patrol boats. *Jane's Fighting Ships, 1964-1965*, p. 424.

14. William W. Upshaw, "The Soviet Strategy to Counter Western Sea Power by Control of Strategic Islands," Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, R.I.: 1965, p. 62.

IV--The Acceptability of Limited Maritime War

1. See page 4-5.

2. Paul R. Schratz, "Clausewitz, Cuba, and Command," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, August 1964, p. 29.

3. Two reasons are given for the predominant attention devoted to general war in military writings. First, it is probably the type of conflict the Soviets fear most. Second, it serves a deterrent function, suggesting to the West an automatic massive response to any provocation. It is noted, however, that increasing attention is being devoted to limited war theory, particularly by military writers. Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Strategy at the Crossroads* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 118.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

5. Garthoff, p. 113.

6. *Current Economic Indicators for the U.S.S.R.*, p. 151.

7. *The Growing Strength of the Soviet Merchant Fleet*, p. 42.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

9. William J. Cromie, "Who Will Own the Oceans' Wealth?" *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, January, 1965, p. 53.

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