

**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE UNITED STATES
STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE IN THE PACIFIC
SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR** //

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PREET GAREWAL

**CENTRE FOR AMERICAN AND WEST EUROPEAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067
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PREFACE

P_R_E_F_A_C_E

United States foreign policy has increasingly come to be dictated by the nation's economic and strategic interests and this is very true of the Asian-Pacific region. In the next decade, the Pacific Basin is likely to be the scene of considerable economic growth, interaction of peoples and increase in trade in the world. The strategic importance of sea lanes straddling the Indian and Pacific Oceans need no emphasis. They are the life lines of the Japanese and Western economies and no less important to the US. The area is of vital importance to American interests and as such it is imperative for America to define its strategic objectives and establish a credible policy in the region. This requirement has been widely accepted and recognized in the US. It has been repeatedly affirmed by various US authorities that the US will continue to remain a great Pacific maritime power as it has been for decades.

US strategy in the Pacific is centered around naval power, the apex of which lies in the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific, at Honolulu. Forward bases include the Subic Bay naval base in the Philippines and US bases in Japan. Admiral Robert L.J. Long, the CINPAC Commander, has described the Pacific and Indian Ocean basins as "the largest theatre of US operations". In this

context, the Soviet Union's active policy in the Pacific area and its continuing naval buildup can perhaps be seen not so much as a threat but as a challenge which is a matter of increasing concern to the United States. Consequently a study of the Pacific Ocean area is gaining tremendous significance in the United States and there is an increasing awareness of the need for a comprehensive and informed analysis of the United States role and strategic priorities in the region.

This dissertation purports to examine the United States strategic perspective in the Pacific with a focus on the role of the US navy and bases. The Soviet naval buildup and its repercussions on US policy have been discussed. This is an analytical and interpretive study which attempts to discern the objective contents from available source reference material and leave behind unwarranted generalizations, preconceived notions and inbuilt biased views.

Chapter I traces the evolution and growth of US commercial and naval activities in the Pacific region beginning with the commercial ventures in the nineteenth century till the end of World War II. The Second World War saw the US firmly entrenched in the Pacific and committed to maintaining a strong naval presence in the area.

Chapter II spans the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. The naval policy of 'forward deployment' in the Pacific paid

off and enabled the US to conduct a war thousands of miles from its shores without any interference in the transit of men and materials from the continental United States to the theatre of operations. During this period the US developed increasingly commercial and military ties with the littoral states of the Western Pacific.

Chapter III studies the post-Vietnam developments in the Pacific; the deterioration in the US overseas base structure; the increased US reliance on maritime strategy and the possible consequences of the growth of Soviet naval power in the Pacific. The chapter analyses US and Soviet naval missions and objectives in the Pacific.

Chapter IV which is also the concluding chapter studies the balance of US and Soviet naval power in the Pacific and assesses the United States capability of furthering its declared policies in the region.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my Supervisor Dr B.K. Shrivastava, without whose guidance I would not have been able to do justice to this study. I am indebted to Commander B.S. Randhawa, DDME, Indian Navy, for his invaluable help. I owe my thanks to the staff of the various libraries I have worked in - the Jawaharlal Nehru University

Library; the Indian Council of World Affairs, Sapru House;
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New Delhi,
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Preet Garewal

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION : VISION OF THE PACIFIC : 1898-1945

The prominent place that the Pacific Ocean would occupy in American strategic thinking was first prophesized in 1852 by Senator William H. Seward (1801-1872), years before he became Secretary of State under Abraham Lincoln. Seward foresaw the day when "the Pacific Ocean, its shores, its islands and the vast regions beyond would become the chief theatre of events...for America".¹

At the time of Seward's prophecy, for the most, the United States had turned its eyes inland and was occupied with the task of consolidating its position on the North American continent. During this period of isolation the predominant idea was to preserve the home market for the home industry. However, its need for tropical raw materials and for larger markets for its steadily increasing output of manufactured goods led the United States to extend its commercial relations in eastern Asia. Thus, to satisfy their growing needs, half a century before Seward's declaration, Americans and the American government began developing commercial and trade "interests" in the Pacific Ocean area.

¹ Nicholas Roosevelt, The Restless Pacific (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1928), p. 3.

The United States mercantile marine was instrumental in this development; its ships plied across the Pacific, furthering American commercial interests in Hawaii, China, Formosa and the Philippines. By Seward's time the Americans knew the Pacific well. The first United States ship had sailed to China in the 18th century. Since then, the United States government had participated in the opening of China to foreign trade and missionaries and was planning to send Commodore Mathew Perry to open Japan to the West.

The United States was not alone in seeking to extend its interests in the Orient. The industrial nations of Western Europe vied with the United States and with each other to carve out and extend exclusive spheres of influence in the Pacific. Such a situation would inevitably lead to conflict. As a result of the activities of American sea farers and missionaries the US gradually became conscious that it needed bases of American power in the Pacific in order to compete successfully with other powers for commercial gain.

The necessity of supporting its policies in peace, as well as in war, placed on the United States the onus of maintaining bases and naval forces in the Pacific. In understanding correctly US interests in the Pacific it is well to keep in mind that a direct relationship exists between national policy and sea power. The navy evolved not only as an implement of war but also as an arm of diplomacy which, if properly used, would ensure the support of a nation's legitimate interest and aspirations in times of peace.

Till the last quarter of the nineteenth century little importance was given to the development or increase of the naval strength of the United States. The United States military policy was land oriented. The navy played a subsidiary role to the army in ensuring the security of the country; its functions primarily revolved around coastal defence and related activities.

The necessity for the development and increase of naval strength and acquisition of bases for the United States, as an essential adjunct to large scale overseas commerce was formally enunciated by Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, US Navy (1840-1914). In his internationally famous work "The Influence of Sea Power on History" published in 1890, Mahan delineated the vital links between the burgeoning American industrial production, overseas markets, the merchant marine and the navy. Mahan defined maritime power to include merchant marine and naval forces plus all of the bases and coaling stations needed to support each.

Mahan popularized the concept of command of the seas or control of the seas² as a key to expanding national

2 The concept of command of the seas had originated with the British admiralty in the previous centuries and was codified and synthesized for all time by the great naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan, US Navy (1840-1914). Command of the sea while not absolutely guaranteeing victory was considered indispensable to the attainment of global strategic objectives by a world power. Command of the sea implied a capability for seeking out the enemy

power and prestige. Underlining the importance of the idea, Mahan said:

Let us start from the fundamental truth warranted by history, that control of the seas and especially along the great lines drawn by national interest or national commerce, is the chief among the merely material elements of power and prosperity of nations. It is so because the sea is the world's greatest medium of circulation. From this follows the principle that subsidiary to such control it is imperative to take possession when it can be done righteously, of such maritime positions as contribute to secure command. 3

However, he cautioned that military positions, fortified by land or by sea, however strong or admirably suited do not confer control by themselves alone; a strong navy was essential to secure outlying dependencies. The logical step was the building of a strong navy—one that would match the largest then existing. It was stated that the very fact that the nation had vital interests beyond the sea made it essential for the navy to be reconstructed and enlarged.

fleet and destroying it; for denying the sea to enemy commerce; for maintaining maritime communications for the benefit of one's own national interest; and for conducting and supporting amphibious operations on distant shores.

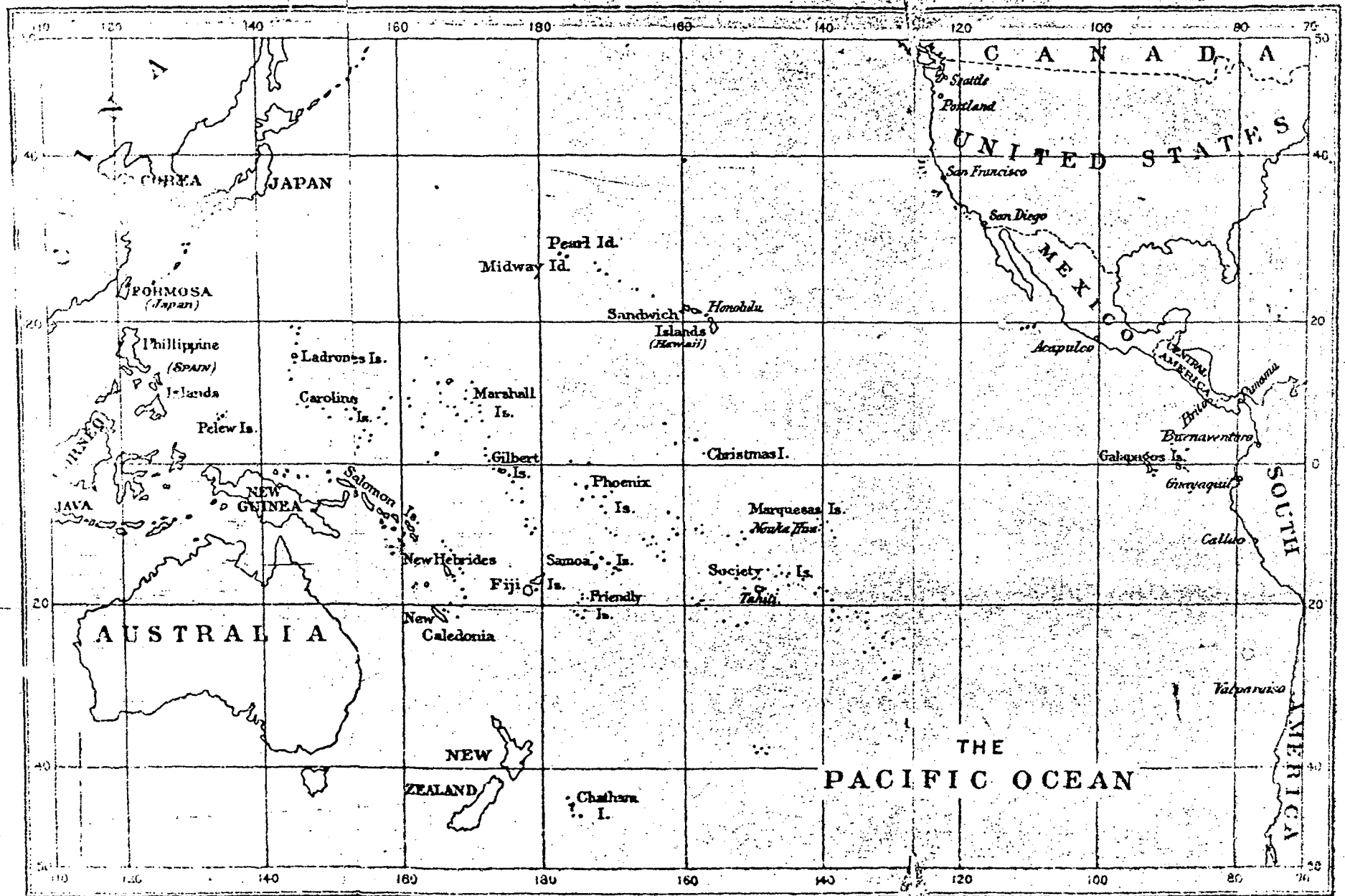
3 Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, U.S. Navy, The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1897), p. 50.

Mahan's concept of command of the sea admirably fitted the circumstances and the time. In the late nineteenth century the United States progressively acquired strategic island bases in the Pacific Ocean and truly became a Pacific power in the military sense. These acquisitions were made partly by accident of events elsewhere, but primarily to support expanding American interests in the area. The first step in this direction was the annexation of Hawaii in January 1893, by the United States, following a revolution in those islands. Naval bases were also acquired in Eastern Samoa and Midway. The climax came with the Spanish American War of 1898 and the subsequent annexation of the Philippines. (See Map I)

On the eve of the Spanish American war, Germany, Russia, France and Great Britain had seized harbours suitable for naval bases on the coast of China; simultaneously extracting from the weak Chinese government long time leases of these harbours and grants of economic concessions in the neighbouring areas, which thereby became their spheres of interest. It was expected that these spheres would evolve into protectorates maintained from naval bases and would, in time be transformed into dominions. In that case all equality of trade would disappear and it was correctly surmized, the United States would be left out in the cold. With China thus on the brink of partition the Spanish American war fortuitously placed the American Navy in control of Manila Bay and with it

MAP 1

THE POSITION OF STRATEGIC ISLANDS IN THE PACIFIC



Source: Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, US Navy, *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future* (Boston, Little Brown and Company, 1897), p. 31

the whole Philippine archipelago. This was, for the United States, a miraculous opportunity to keep in step in the east with the powers of Europe and Japan and prevent its exclusion from the commerce of Asia.

Enroute to the Philippines the United States had occupied Wake Island and the Spanish Island of Guam, the latter being taken as a possible naval base and cable station. Wake Island and the Midways, the southern Island of Palmyra in the Hawaiian group, together with the Guano islands of the mid-Pacific viz., Jarvis (1857), Bakers (1857), and Howlands (1858) were to become important as landing places for aerial navigation west and south of the Hawaiian group. Acquisition of these territories assured the United States access to the markets and raw materials of the Pacific basin. Ships operating from these bases, together with the Panama Canal and additional bases in the Caribbean, gave the United States a protective cordon with which to deter attack by any major power on its trade routes and on the continental United States.

Thus, according to J. William Middendorf II, an eminent scholar who served as Under Secretary and Acting Secretary of the US Navy during 1973-74, "the Spanish American war had projected the United States into the role of a world power with overseas interests and territories requiring a

strong navy".⁴ Captain Carl H. Amme, US Navy (Retd) feels that with the defeat of the Spanish fleet at Manila, "the United States found itself a world power with responsibilities on the other side of the Pacific. No longer relegated to the subordinate task of coastal defence, the navy assumed the primary role in the nation's defense".⁵

Roosevelt and the Buildup of American Naval Power

Mahan's philosophy of sea power entered the White House in the person of Theodore Roosevelt⁶ who was instrumental in translating Mahan's concept of sea power into hardware and territories. Naval policy began to influence the spirit and direction of American foreign relations. So completely did the new President dominate both foreign relations and naval development in the opening years of the twentieth century that the naval policy of America was, in larger degree, the naval policy of Theodore Roosevelt.

Strategically speaking, continental United States in 1901, consisted of two long and exposed seaboards, as

4 J. William Middendorf II, "American Maritime Strategy and Soviet Naval Expansion", Strategic Review (Washington, D.C.), vol. 4, Winter 1976, p. 17.

5 Captain Carl H. Amme, U.S. Navy (Retd), "Seapower and the Super Powers", United States Naval Institute Proceedings (Annapolis, Maryland), vol. 94, October 1968, p. 27.

6 Theodore Roosevelt was President of the United States of America from 1901-1909.

far apart as if situated on two opposite sides of the globe. It would have been extremely difficult to move a whole fleet from one ocean to another. There were two solutions to this strategic problem. One was to station in each ocean an independent naval force strong enough to cope with any situation likely to arise there. The other was to build an inter-oceanic isthmian canal which would halve the distance between the Pacific and the Atlantic seaboard. The first would be impracticable after the annexation of the Spanish Islands in the Western Pacific in view of the naval strength required to safeguard the vast region. The canal was a feasible and practical alternative.

Theodore Roosevelt was committed to strengthening the navy as well as to the building of an isthmian canal. He rightly pointed out that the canal would "greatly increase the size and efficiency of our navy if the navy is of sufficient size...." Otherwise, the "building of the canal would merely be giving a hostage to any power of superior strength".⁷

The naval situation in the Eastern Pacific was favourable to the United States. The only conceivable source of attack was Japan; but the Pacific Ocean plus the United States navy constituted an impregnable barrier against

7 Messages and Papers of the President (Bur. Nat. Lit, ed), col. 14, p. 6722. Quoted in Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918 (Princeton, New Jersey; Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 251.

aggression from that quarter on the United States mainland.⁸ In the Western Pacific the situation was much more difficult. In Guam and the Philippines, the United States possessed not only exposed dependencies but also well located sites for advanced bases necessary to sustain the naval power essential to support the prestige and policies of the United States in the Far East. However, these sites had yet to be developed⁹ and the government had yet to build a fighting fleet strong enough to ensure their security. It was clear until such developments had taken place ashore and afloat, the strategic value of these insular outposts would not only remain negligible, but in certain war situations they were in fact, likely to become vulnerable liabilities.

Events that followed helped Roosevelt achieve his stated aims. As in former years foreign relations and international crises had frequently influenced development of naval strength; now again, in the beginning of the twentieth century rivalry in Japan in relation to China, provided a catalyst for a repetition of this trend.

President Roosevelt and his Secretary of State John Hay had repeatedly endorsed the open door principle

8 Japanese navy's strength was exaggerated. This is apparent from the fact that even during the World War II, Japan could not attack the US mainland.

9 When the United States took possession there were no naval works in Guam and only minor facilities in the Philippines.

with regard to China and had striven discreetly to secure favourable commercial opportunities for Americans in that country.¹⁰ However, the success of the open door policy depended on a complete equipoise in the Far East. It could not be maintained if any power upset the balance. This being the case, the policy was doomed from its inception in the face of rising Japanese militarism.

The Russo-Japanese War 1905 provided a fillip to Japanese self esteem and victory brought with it a realization of their ability to inflict defeat on a major European power. President Roosevelt reluctantly mediated the Russo-Japanese war, in part to protect the open door as well as to maintain a balance power in the Far East.¹¹ Despite Japan's assurances to the contrary, soon after the Russo-Japanese war the United States had reason to doubt Japan's devotion to the open door principle. Adding to the friction in American-Japanese

10 On 6 September 1899, Secretary of State John Hay addressed the first so called open door note to all nationals in their spheres of interest and leased territories. The policy was re-enunciated on 3 July 1900, after the Boxer rebellion - an uprising in China against foreign influence, when they circulated the Second open door note. The second open door note announced that it was the policy of the government of the United States to seek a solution which may bring about permanent peace and safety to China, preserve Chinese territorial and administrative entity, protect all rights guaranteed to friendly powers by treaty and international law, and safeguard for the world the principle of equal and impartial trade with all parts of the Chinese empire.

11 See Henry F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt : A Biography (New York; Harcourt Brace and Company, 1931). Howard K. Beale, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power (Baltimore; The Johns Hopkins Press, 1956).

relations were manifestations of anti-Japanese sentiment in the United States. In 1907 there were anti-Japanese riots in San Francisco and it became imperative that the United States come to grips with the situation that entailed a possibility of war with Japan.

The European powers maintained squadrons in Asiatic waters which symbolized a continuing threat to Chinese sovereignty and hence to the Asiatic interests and policy of the United States. But these forces were comparatively weak and were not generally regarded as a direct menace to the Philippines. On the other hand, Japanese commitments and ambitions related chiefly to Eastern Asia and Japanese power was concentrated in Asiatic waters. Japanese ambitions like those of the continental European powers, collided with American interests and policies. And, to American strategists it was clear that in case of war, the Japanese would logically strike first at the Philippine islands.

The situation had far reaching implications. An American fleet strong enough to guarantee security to the Philippines could destroy the Japanese navy and blockade Japan. On the other hand, a fleet that could defend the Japanese homeland against the United States, would constitute a standing menace to the security of the Philippines. Any aggressive movement on the part of either power to strengthen its navy would arouse anxiety in the other. While the United States was potentially the stronger, it was not then certain

that the American people would support their government to the bitter end in a naval race with Japan.¹²

No one envisaged more clearly than Roosevelt the desperate struggle that would ensue if the United States, inadequately prepared, should have to fight Japan single handed in Asiatic waters. Thus stood the complicated and portentous politico-naval situation that confronted Roosevelt in the Far East. Gradually, as he watched the growing antagonism of Japanese and American interests in the Far East, and the ominous development of anti-Japanese sentiment within the United States, his anxiety over Japan grew; he launched a larger naval programme, and finally, as a display of power, sent the entire United States battleship fleet into the Pacific and on around the world.¹³

As Roosevelt saw it, the authority of the United States whether in Europe or the Far East depended on the power and reputation of the American navy. His demands for more appropriations for the navy sparked off some of the most bitter legislative struggles in American history. It was largely due to his efforts that by the end of 1907, the United States had two great fighting units - the Atlantic

12 Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 256.

13 For details of Theodore Roosevelt's analysis of the situation in the Far East and the role of the U.S. Navy see Theodore Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922), pp. 532-59.

fleet of sixteen battleships, and the Pacific fleet of eight armoured cruisers and an equal number of light cruisers.

However, Roosevelt was unsuccessful in his efforts to develop a system of overseas naval stations. In 1903, the Secretary of the Navy John Davis Long declared "the United States" had a "large fleet" in "Asiatic waters", but "no naval base...nearer than Puget Sound or San Francisco Bay"....He stated, "without a sufficient naval base of our own in Asiatic waters, the position of our fleet would be untenable".¹⁴ The President backed up this plea with a strong appeal for immediate action, but with little effect. "Congress authorized slightly larger expenditures on the overseas stations, but failed to go into the matter in a large way and continued to vote millions for unneeded navy yards in the United States".¹⁵

Roosevelt's successor President William Howard Taft¹⁶ and his Secretary of State Philander C. Knox were determined to secure the full substance as well as the theory of the open door. The administration's aggressive Asian policy and their coming into conflict with the entrenched

14 Navy Dept., "Ann. Rept.", 1903, p. 13. Quoted in Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 281.

15 Navy Dept., "Ann. Repts.", 1907, pp. 43 ff. Quoted in ibid., p. 281.

16 Taft was President of the United States from 1909-1913.

interests of the other powers in the area, called for a fleet which would be able if necessary to carry on an offensive war in the Western Pacific. Such was the view of the President who began his tenure with an unqualified endorsement of his predecessors naval policy and with the declared intention of backing up American interests in the Orient with something more than verbal protest.¹⁷ However, hard times, intrasectional warfare and intraparty strife hardly produced a favourable atmosphere in which to launch a great naval programme and only with great difficulty did the administration manage to hold the naval rank attained under Roosevelt. President Taft's proposal for maintaining a first class naval base in either Guam or the Philippine islands, also received an unfavourable response. Tension in the Pacific remained and the administration did nothing to prepare systematically for the war, which they were aware, must lurk around the corner.

The First World War and its Aftermath

The outbreak of the Great War in August 1914, foreshadowed an upsurge of navalism in the United States. The "Preparedness Campaign"¹⁸ which got underway in 1914-15 and

17 See Henry F. Pringle, The Life and Times of William Howard Taft: A Biography (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1939).

18 For details on the Preparedness Campaign", see Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918 (Princeton; New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1946), Chapter Eighteen.

President Wilson's conversion to the movement opened the way for an armament programme without precedent in American history. It established a new standard of American naval power which hastened the convergence of naval policy with foreign policy in process since the accession of Theodore Roosevelt to presidency in 1901. Renouncing its earlier standard of a navy second only to Great Britain, the United States established a new standard of naval power. In a reply to the Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniel's letter regarding development of the navy, the General Board on 30 July 1915 replied that "the navy of the United States should ultimately be equal to the most powerful maintained by any other nation in the world".¹⁹ This plan saw its culmination in the Naval Act of 1916 which projected at that time an unprecedented naval building programme. In every report from 1917 on, the Secretary of Navy, Josephus Daniel reiterated the demand for the most powerful fleet on the seas by 1925.

In the aftermath of the war the United States navy held undisputable sway over the eastern Pacific and over that part of the western Atlantic which lay north of the equator. The continental United States therefore, enjoyed a measure of security unapproached by any other great nation in modern times. On the other hand, the developments

19 Sen. Doc. No. 231, 64th Cong, 1st sess. Quoted in George T. Davis, A Navy Second to None: The Development of Modern American Naval Policy (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940), p. 213.

which so enhanced the security of the continental United States, just as markedly weakened the strategic position of American territories in the Western Pacific and complicated the problem of supporting the United States 'real or speculative interests in eastern Asia. This problem was rendered still more difficult by the war's disruptive effects on the political situation in the Far East.

Prior to 1914, the United States had derived marked advantage not only from the comparative weakness of Japan but also from the multilateral balance of power which supported at least the semblance of a commercial open door and the pretence of China's political unity. By the end of the first world war the balance of power had been seriously disturbed in Asia. The war strengthened the military power of Japan and Japan revealed far reaching ambitions. American and Japanese policies came into conflict in Shantung; in Siberia; in Yap which was a nodal point for American cables running between the United States and the Far East; and in the mandated islands the Marshall islands, Caroline islands and Mariana's islands which had enormous strategic value. The American ambassador to China Paul S. Reinsch warned in early twenties that Japan would not neglect its opportunity to dominate eastern Asia.²⁰

20 See Paul S. Reinsch, An American Diplomat in China (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1922), pp. 123-8.

At this time the Japanese navy seemed to be rapidly approaching unchallengeable supremacy in the Western Pacific. A war with Japan, necessarily fought in Asiatic waters, would involve the United States in difficulties that were fearful to contemplate. These potential difficulties were vastly increased by the failure to build up adequate dockyards and other shore facilities either in Guam or the Philippines. There was competent opinion at the close of the world war, that as a result of this failure the command of the western Pacific had passed to Japan.

The problems of the Pacific were not solved at the peace conference at Paris. According to an American scholar: "In an ocean where the United States aspired to play the role of a dominant power, we now faced an empire in a strong strategic position, expanding rapidly and capable of threatening America's policies and interests in Asia."²¹

In the light of these events in the Pacific and the evidence of clash on fundamental interests, it was only natural that American naval strategists should turn their closest attention to that ocean. The Helm Commission of 1916 was followed after the war by other expert studies and visits of the Secretary of the Navy and important congressional committee members. The reports and proposals

21 George T. Davis, A Navy Second to None: The Development of Modern American Naval Policy (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940), p. 247. George T. Davis, is a Research Associate at the Institute of International Studies, Yale University.

of these groups indicated that a major development of American sea power was on the way. The Pacific coast, Alaska, Hawaii and Guam were to be provided with the facilities necessary to accommodate the huge tonnage of the main American fleet.

In the summer of 1919 the United States moved the major part of its battle fleet to the Pacific and announced that it would remain there. To the Pacific coast were sent not only the heaviest but also the newest units. (See Table I)

Table I

Composition of the Fleets - November 1, 1919

		Atlantic	Pacific	Asiatic
Battleships	15	313,450	14 325,000	-
Cruisers	4	32,930	7 38,950	4 29,755
Auxiliaries	170	335,318	171 426,046	13 24,859
Total	189	681,698	192 789,996	17 54,614

Report of Secretary Daniel , 1919

Source: George T. Davis, A Navy Second to None : The Development of Modern American Naval Policy (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1940), p. 251.

The transfer of the American battleship fleet to the Pacific, the appropriations for naval bases in that ocean, the unparalleled building programme of the United States coupled with the strong (and even peremptory) tone which the Department of State used in its protests moved Japan to action. Her naval budget was tripled, from \$5,000,000 in 1917 to \$245,000,000 in 1921. In July 1920 the Japanese parliament voted for creating a battleline of 8 battleships and 8 battle cruisers to be replaced every 8 years.

Thus a keen naval competition between the United States and Japan began. This was the naval rivalry that involved not only the United States and Japan but Great Britain also, for the latter would not willingly surrender its traditional mastery of the sea, and this mastery was threatened by the naval programme of the United States which once completed would have made it the greatest naval power.

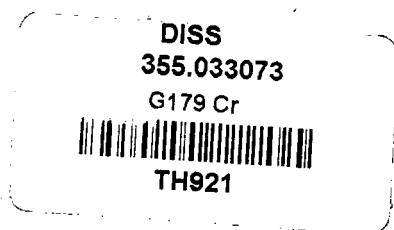
From the American point of view the naval race with Great Britain could be halted if the one with Japan could be stopped. But stopping the race with Japan was dependent upon reaching an understanding with the latter on important policies in the Far East. It was with these ends in view that President Warren G. Harding of the United States called for a conference in Washington in 1921.

The Washington Naval Conference and its Implications

The Washington naval conference which opened on 12 November 1921 resulted in the signing of a number of treaties on pertinent issues. The five power treaty signed on 6 February 1922 fixed the ratio of capital ships between the United States, Great Britain, Japan, France and Italy at 5-5-3-1.7-1.7. This involved the sinking or scrapping of numerous older ships and ships under construction and for a ten year halt in the building of capital ships, with only limited replacements of superannuated ships thereafter until 1936. Aircraft carriers were to be limited in approximately the same ratio as capital ships. The treaty also stipulated that the United States, Great Britain and Japan maintain the status quo with regard to fortifications and naval bases in its island possessions in the Western Pacific.²²

To forestall two of the navies suddenly leaning against the third was the purpose of the ten year quadruple consultative pact for preserving the status quo of the Pacific

22 In the case of the United States, these were the Aleutian Islands, the Philippines, Guam, Wake and Samoa; for Great Britain, they were Hong Kong and its South Sea Islands; for Japan they were the Kuriles to the north and to the south, Formosa, the Lu Chu and Bonin Islands and the widely scattered groups of the Caroline, Marshall and Mariana islands, former German possessions held by Japan under the League mandate.



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which replaced the Anglo-Japanese alliance. In case the rights of any party in the region of the Pacific Ocean were threatened by the aggressive action of any power, the four treaty powers (the United States, France, Great Britain and Japan) agreed to communicate with each other as to the most efficient measures to be taken, jointly or singly, to meet the exigencies of the particular situation.

The nine power treaty of Washington gave treaty form for the first time to the traditional policies of the United States with relation to China, when all nations with interests in China promised to respect the policy of the open door. In addition to these treaties, Japan during the conference made a separate treaty with the United States recognizing American cable rights on Yap island and a special treaty with China for the speedy return of Shantung.²³

The Pacific Ocean seemed safe after the Washington Conference by virtue of the fact that it left Japanese power supreme in its own waters and the American navy in control of the eastern part of the ocean.

Despite assurances to the contrary, a large section of American public opinion regarded the limitations upon

23 For details relating to the Washington Conference 1921-22 see George T. Davis, A Navy Second to None: The Development of Modern American Naval Policy (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940). Dudley W. Knox, A History of the United States Navy (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1936), Harold and Margaret Sprout, Toward a New Order of Sea Power: American Naval Policy and the World Scene, 1918-1922 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1946).

United States naval operations in the Western Pacific, as a surrender of American possessions and interests in the region. It was believed that the Philippines were more exposed than ever and that the United States had entrusted its policies and possessions in the Orient to the solemn promises of Japan. According to William Henry Chamberlain a distinguished author and correspondent of the Christian Science Monitor stationed at Tokyo:

§ The American agreement to abstain from fortifying the Aleutians and Guam and to construct no new fortifications in the Philippines was a substantial concession to Japan's security.... It meant that the United States voluntarily renounced certain strategic advantages of its Pacific possessions. It meant that in the event of an American-Japanese conflict, the United States, unless it were acting in alliance or agreement with some other power with oriental bases would be severely handicapped in striking directly at the enemy. 24

According to Captain Dudley W. Knox, US Navy (Retd.):

The general effect of the restriction upon naval bases in the Orient, was virtually to prevent the United States from exercising effective naval power in that region. Thus as with capital ships, so with bases, only the United States was called upon for unequitable sacrifices, the extent of which could be realized only by naval technicians. 25

24 William Henry Chamberlain, "Naval Bases in the Pacific", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 15, April 1937, p. 448.

25 Captain Dudley W. Knox, US Navy (Retd.), A History of the United States Navy (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1936), p. 428.

The Washington Conference failed to limit the build-up of auxiliary naval vessels. This was not regarded too seriously at that time; but although the United States refrained for several years from building new cruisers, both Great Britain and Japan embarked upon building programmes in the unrestricted categories.²⁶ The United States therefore found actual parity with Great Britain slipping from its grasp and its superiority over Japan being whittled down. In the hope of correcting this situation, President Coolidge of the United States invited the other four naval powers to meet in Geneva in the summer of 1927.

Table II

Comparative Naval Strength : Capital Ships

Power	Built		Actual Ratio of Tonnage	Tonnage to be Arrived at in 1941	True Ratio to be Arrived at in 1941
	No.	Tons			
United States	18	525,850	4.71	525,000	5.00
British Empire	20	556,350	5.00	525,000	5.00
Japanese Empire	10	301,320	2.71	315,000	3.00
France	9	197,670	1.77	175,000	1.67
Italy	5	109,220	.98	175,000	1.67

²⁶ For complete details of comparative naval strength see Tables II-VII.

Table III

COMPARATIVE NAVAL STRENGTH : AIRCRAFT CARRIERS

Power	Built, No	Building or Autho- rized Tons	Total Tonnage Allowed by Treaty	Actual Ratio of Tonnage	Allowed Ratio of Tonnage
United States	4	92,200(a)	135,000	4.13	5.00
British Empire	6	111,450	135,000	5.00	5.00
Japanese Empire	3	63,300	81,000	2.84	3.00
France	1	21,160	60,000	.94	1.67
Italy		None	60,000	0.00	1.67

(a) Including the aircraft carrier authorized by Congress on February 7, 1929, tonnage estimated at 13,500 tonnes but not yet appropriated for at date of printing.

Table IVComparative Naval Strength : Cruisers, First Line(A) Unlimited

Power	Built		Building		Authorized or Appropriated for		Total		Ratio of Tonnage
	No.	Tons	No.	Tons	No.	Tons	No.	Tons	
United States	10	75,000	8	80,000	15	150,000 ^b	33	305,000	3.60
British Empire	54 ^c	303,940	8	76,600	5	43,200 ^d	67	423,740	5.00
Japanese Empire	26	143,955	6	60,000	1	10,000	33	213,955	2.52
France	9	69,050	3	30,000			12	99,050	1.11
Italy	12	67,370	6	40,000	2	20,000	20	127,370	1.50

(A) In addition, the Powers have second line cruisers, over effective age of 20 years, as follows: United States, 22 totalling 179,425 tons; British Empire none; Japan 9 totalling 71,434 tons; France 6 totalling 64,770 tons; Italy 1 of 7,234 tons.

b Authorized by Congress February 7, 1929, but not yet appropriated for at date of printing.

c Includes Yarmouth (5,250 tons) on disposal list.

d Tonnage estimated; including three cruisers (26,600 tons estimated) to be laid down shortly, but not yet appropriated for at date of printing.

Table VComparative Naval Strength : Destroyers, First Line (a)
(Unlimited)

Power	<u>Built</u>		<u>Building, Authorised</u>		<u>Total</u>		Ratio of Tonnage
	No.	Tons	<u>No</u>	<u>or Appropriated for</u> Tons	No.	Tons	
United States	262	312,479		None	262	312,479(b)	5.00
British Empire	162	198,045	20	27,900(c)	182	225,945	3.62
Japanese Empire	96	103,160	19	32,300	115	135,460	2.17
France	46	60,441	22	50,200	68	110,641	1.77
Italy	73	76,978	16	29,336	89	106,314	1.70

(a) In addition, the Powers have second line destroyers, over effective age of 16 years, as follows: United States, 8 totalling 5,936 tons; British Empire, 3 totalling 2,100 tons; Japan 4 totalling 3,500 tons; France, 4 totalling 2,175 tons; Italy, none.

(b) Exclusive of light mine layers.

(c) Tonnage estimated.

Table VIComparative Naval Strength: Submarines, First Line (a)
(Unlimited)

Power	Built		Building, Authorized or Appropriated for		Totals		Ratio of Tonnage
	No.	Tons	No.	Tons	No.	Tons	
United States	112	85,607	2	5,520	114	89,127	5.00
British Empire	52	43,190	18	27,720 ^b	70	70,910	3.98
Japan	62	58,417	13	21,590	75	80,007	4.49
France	39	35,539	43	53,616	82	80,155 ^c	5.00
Italy	37	15,243	25	21,368	62	36,611	2.05

(a) In addition, the Powers have second line submarines, over effective age of 23 years, as follows: United States, 10 totalling 3,852 tons; British Empire, none; Japan, 6 totalling 1,749 tons; France, 4 totalling 2,043 tons; Italy, none.

(b) Tonnage estimated.

(c) Including submarines for coastal defense of less than 700 tons, as follows: built, 11 totalling 6,600 tons; building or appropriated for, 12 totalling 7,560 tons.

Table VII

Comparative Naval Strength : New Naval Construction

Type or Class	United States				British Empire				Japan				France				Italy			
	Laid Down	Appro. For	No	Total Tonnage	Laid Down	Appro. For	No.	Total Tonnage	Laid Down	Appro. For	No.	Total Tonnage	Laid Down	Appro. For	No.	Total Tonnage	Laid Down	Appro. For	No.	Total Tonnage
Capital Ships		1(c)			2			2 67,400 ^a												
Aircraft Carriers	2	1(c)	3	79,500 ^b	2		2 41,100	2		2	53,800	1		1	21,760					
Cruisers	8	15(c)	23	230,000 ^b	15	2	17 166,600 ^b	15	1	16	128,285 ^b	8	1	9	81,950 ^b	6	2	8	60,000 ^b	
Mine Layers					1		1 6,740	1	1 ^c	2	3,000 ^b	1		1	5,212					
Destroyers (all classes)					10	12	22 30,425 ^b	38	13	51	72,480 ^b	50		50	92,640 ^b	28	4	32	49,656 ^b	
Submarines (all classes)	3		3	8,200	14	7	21 31,865 ^b	28	5	33	48,834 ^b	63		63	70,539 ^b	21	6	27	23,440 ^b	
Gunboats and River Gunboats	6		6	2,790	4	1	5 1,144 ^g	4	2 ^c	6	1,352 ^d	1		1	750					
Mine Sweepers					2		2 1,890	6		6	3,690					10		10	6,652	
Submarine Tenders					1	1	2 32,000 ^b	2		2	17,000		1	1	6,000					
Oil Tenders									3	3	46,200	1	4	5	71,915	7	1	8	42,552	

Notes: a Constructed under terms of Washington Treaty to replace a pre-war vessels to achieve parity with U.S. fleet.

b Tonnage estimated.

c No data

d Excluding tonnage of the two gunboats appropriated for but not yet laid down.

e Authorized by Congress February 7, 1929, but not yet appropriated for at date of printing.

g Omits tonnage of ships appropriated for.

Source: For Tables II-VII: Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 7, April 1929, pp. 501-2.

The Geneva Naval Conference of 1927 was as conspicuous for its failure as the Washington Conference had been for its success. Subsequent revelations brought out the fact that elements in the British government, including Winston Churchill, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, were not really willing to concede full naval parity to the United States. The United States on the other hand had increasing involvements. It had a growing commerce and no guarantee of neutral rights in future wars. Its naval strategists were intent upon having a navy capable of defending its sea borne trade against potential belligerent interference from Great Britain.

The London Naval Conference in 1930 was the last successful attempt to limit the size of the navies by international agreement. According to George T. Davis -

For Japan, the London Treaty was of the greatest importance. The strategic benefits which she had gained at Washington were tilted further to her advantage. In 1922 the United States had agreed to limit the expansion of its naval bases on important approaches to Japanese waters in exchange for Japanese acceptance of a 5:3 ratio in capital ships. This ratio gave the United States Navy, in the opinion of its commanding personnel only a fair chance of successful action in the western waters of the Pacific. After the London Conference the ratio was whittled down to a point where such an expedition would be a matter of the gravest peril. 27 (See Table VIII)

27 George T. Davis, A Navy Second to None: The Development of Modern American Naval Policy (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940), p. 334.

Table VIII

		Status quo 1921	Treaty Allowances 1931
U.S. margin over parity with Britain	Battleships	340,030	0
	Destroyers	112,264	0
	Submarines	9,572	0
British Margin over U.S. Cruisers		461,866	15,000
1921 net U.S. Margin		<u>80,545</u> 381,321	
Less 1931 British margin		15,550	
Final British gain by treaty			396,871
U.S. margin over 5 : 3 ratio with Japan	Battleships	138,340	-
	Destroyers	260,392	(-) 15,450
	Submarines	41,071	(-) 21,580
Japan's margin over 3:5 ratio with U.S. cruisers		439,803 <u>40,905</u>	14,750
1921 net U.S. margin		398,898	
1931 Japan over 3:5 U.S. total		51,280	
Final Japanese gain by treaty			450,178

Source: Dudley W. Knox, A History of the United States Navy
(New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons; 1936), p. 431.

These reductions in America's relative strength in ships combined with the restrictions upon its naval bases in the western Pacific rendered its navy inferior to that of Japan for operations in the Orient, thus leaving the security of American interests there primarily dependent upon treaties - principally the Nine Power treaty guaranteeing the political and administrative integrity of China, together with the other agreements negotiated at Washington as predicates to the Naval Treaty of limitation. About a year after the London Treaty of Limitation went into effect, Japan renewed its penetration of China which met with vigorous but futile protests from the American Secretary of State, Henry L. Stimson as being a violation of the 1922 Nine Power Treaty. In 1934 Japan served notice that for it the limitations of the Washington and London treaties would terminate on 31 December 1936. An attempt to reach an agreement was made at another conference in London (1935-36) but the Japanese delegation withdrew when the British and American delegations refused their demand for parity in all categories.

The Washington Five Power Treaty came to an end on the last day of 1936. Thereafter there was no treaty limit on the number of naval vessels to be built by any government. Rumours that Japan was building 45,000 ton battleships, and the Japanese Government's refusal to

confirm or deny such reports, led the United States, Great Britain and France in 1938 to invoke the 'escalator clause' of the treaty of 1936. Thereafter, the sky was the limit in number, size and armament of the world's navies.

The Road to Pearl Harbour

The announcement by Japan in December 1934 that she would not renew the naval limitation treaties of Washington and London on their expiry brought the United States, in the words of Secretary of State Cordell Hull "to the oriental crossroads of decision". According to Hull, two courses were open before the United States. "One was to withdraw perhaps with dignity from the Far East", which meant in effect, "turning over to the domination of Japan the entire Pacific Ocean west of Hawaii....". The other course was to insist on the maintenance of law and the legitimate American rights and interests in the Far East; an observance of the treaties and declarations that guaranteed an independent China and pledged equality to all nations; and non intervention, non-aggression and peaceful settlement of disputes in the Orient.²⁸ The latter course was adopted and this was to lead seven years later to Pearl Harbor and eventually to the destruction of Japan's empire and its military and naval strength.

28 Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1948), 2 vols, I, pp. 290-91.

The Japanese moves in the Pacific region were viewed with concern in many quarters of the United States. The Japanese aggression in China directly threatened US access. In February 1939, Japan followed up its announcement of a "New Order for East Asia" by seizing the island of Hainan off the South China Coast, and a month later, the Spratley Islands in the South China Sea. Thus Japan, while ostensibly fighting only China, was moving southward into an area where its forces constituted a potential threat to the possessions of France, the United States, Great Britain and even those of the Netherlands. In 1939 United States ambassador to Japan Joseph C. Grew wrote that he found "an unmistakable hardening of the administration's attitude towards Japan and a marked disinclination to allow American interests to be crowded out of China."²⁹

In September 1939, the Second World War began. The war spread rapidly, Germany securing quick victories over France, leaving a beleaguered Britain continuing the fight alone. Japan's joining the Axis powers in September 1940 aroused grave concern in the United States. The spectacle of Japan and Germany subjugating the weak nations and dominating the Atlantic and Pacific was frightening. Should England and the British Empire fall, it was thought their rich resources and naval power would have been at

29 J.C. Grew, Turbulent Era : A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, 1904-1945 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1952), 2 vols, II, pp. 1211-12.

the service of Germany and Japan and the United States would be surrounded by a formidable combination of hostile forces. The only safeguard then was to prevent the collapse of the British forces.

Perhaps the clearest exposition of the new state of American-East Asian relations was made by Ambassador Grew in his "green light message" of September 1940, a few days before the signing of an Axis alliance. Castigating Japan as "one of the predatory powers", he said:

American interests in the Pacific are definitely threatened by her policy of southward expansion, which is a thrust at the British Empire. Admittedly America's security has depended in a measure upon the British fleet, which has been in turn and could only have been supported by the British Empire. If the support of the British Empire in this her hour of travail is conceived to be in our interest, and most emphatically do I so conceive it, we must strive by every means to preserve the status quo in the Pacific, at least until the war in Europe has been won or lost. 30

Giving expression to a widely held opinion, John Gunther, former correspondent in Europe of the Chicago Daily, wrote: "Under the present circumstances, Japan is the only nation that can possibly threaten our Pacific interests, the only power - with or without allies - with

30 Quoted in Akira Iriye, Across the Pacific : An Inner History of American-East Asian Relations (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1967), p. 207.

whom a Pacific war is conceivable. Therefore, American military and naval policy in the Pacific is predicated on the assumption that Japan is the principal "enemy" to be faced."³¹

In the United States many believed that if war should come the Philippines might well be the first object of a Japanese attack. The question of the capacity of the United States to defend these islands was heatedly debated by many experts. The majority opinion was that they could not be held against a sustained or large scale Japanese assault.³² To make the Philippines impregnable would have cost at least one billion dollars, a sum that no American Congress in the prevalent circumstances would have dreamt of appropriating for such a purpose.

Keeping in mind the comparatively weak position of the United States in China and the Philippines, it was quite clear that in case of a war with Japan, their main reliance would have to be on their line of defence in the mid-Pacific; that line of defence was the United States Navy.

31 John Gunther, "Our Pacific Frontier", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 18, July 1940, p. 585.

32 General Douglas MacArthur, head of the Philippine military establishment held a contrary view; he made an elaborate case with particular emphasis on the growing strength of the Philippine army, which was training 40,000 recruits a year. But most observers in the United States sharply disagreed with General MacArthur. Few American Generals and Admirals thought they could hold the Philippines; most of them were against even the making of an attempt to do so.

The comparative naval strengths of the United States and Japan as on 1 January 1940 are given in Table IX.

Table IX

	<u>United States</u>		<u>Japan</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Tonnage</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Tonnage</u>
Battleships	15	464,300	9	272,070
Aircraft Carriers	5	129,100	6	88,470
Heavy Cruisers	18	175,200	12	107,800
Light Cruisers	19	157,775	15	97,555
Destroyers	182	236,070	84	113,476
Submarines	63	75,175	35	52,432

Source: John Gunther, "Our Pacific Frontier", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 18, July 1940, p. 591.

American ships under construction on 1 January 1940 included eight new battleships, two aircraft carriers, six light cruisers, one large mine layer, thirty one destroyers and fifteen submarines. Of the Japanese naval programme, Admiral Stark, Chief of Naval operations said: "The building programme of the Japanese is unknown in its complete details; they make a fetish of naval secrecy.

But, as far as we can tell it, it consists - including ships building and appropriated for - of four battleships, two aircraft carriers, five light cruisers, nine destroyers and three submarines."³³

The Second World War

Japan was close to war with the United States but it entered into negotiations in the spring of 1941 which continued into December. The United States, to try to thwart an expected Japanese thrust into the East Indies placed tight economic sanctions upon Japan in July. The Japanese reaction was to prepare for war in case negotiations failed. By the end of November the United States (through intercepted Japanese messages) knew that a military attack was likely. Roosevelt and his military advisers expecting it to be against the Philippines, Thailand or British Malaya, were caught by surprise when Japanese planes struck at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941.

The attack saw the virtual destruction of the United States Pacific fleet on the first day of the war. The United States incurred the loss of two battleships and the immobilizing of six others. The Japanese also sunk or badly damaged three cruisers, two destroyers and four

33 Testimony of Admiral Harold R. Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, to the Naval Affairs Committee of the United States Senate. Quoted in New York Times, 19 April 1940.

auxiliary weapons and wiped out the island's air defences, destroying almost all the planes before they got off the ground.

The success of Japan's overall strategy in the Second World War hinged on the attack on the United States fleet at Pearl Harbor. By thus weakening the American naval forces, it hoped for complete freedom to carry out its planned expansion into Southeast Asia. In fact, three aircraft carriers escaped destruction at Pearl Harbor and gave the United States - which promptly launched the most massive programme of ship-building and arms manufacture in history - a nucleus with which to fight back. Even so, the first months of the war saw a series of Japanese victories. Then the tide turned and in three years of bitter and costly fighting the allies wrested one island after another from the Japanese forces who resisted them with suicidal determination.

In the Pacific the United States undertook a strategy of defence towards Japan and instead of resorting to counter attack from the China-Burma-India theatre, "island hopping" tactics and the bombing of Japanese territories were adopted. Submarines and airpower were the crucial means of destroying Japan. China and Southeast Asia's role was minimized and the war became in fact naval and air warfare between Japan and the United States.

Operations in the Pacific brought about some sweeping changes in the prevalent concepts of naval warfare. As drawn home by the Japanese in the Philippines the aircraft carrier came to be recognized as the most effective means of controlling the seas; the battleship became obsolete. It was during naval action against the Japanese in the Pacific that the "requeim for the battleship was written".³⁴ The submarines effectiveness in disrupting enemy lines of communication and supply especially in the Pacific where garrisons had to be maintained on remote islands was fully realized. The tide turned against the Japanese after the Battle of Midway (1942); the United States wrested the initiative from the Japanese and the end of the Second World War saw the United States Navy supreme in the Pacific.

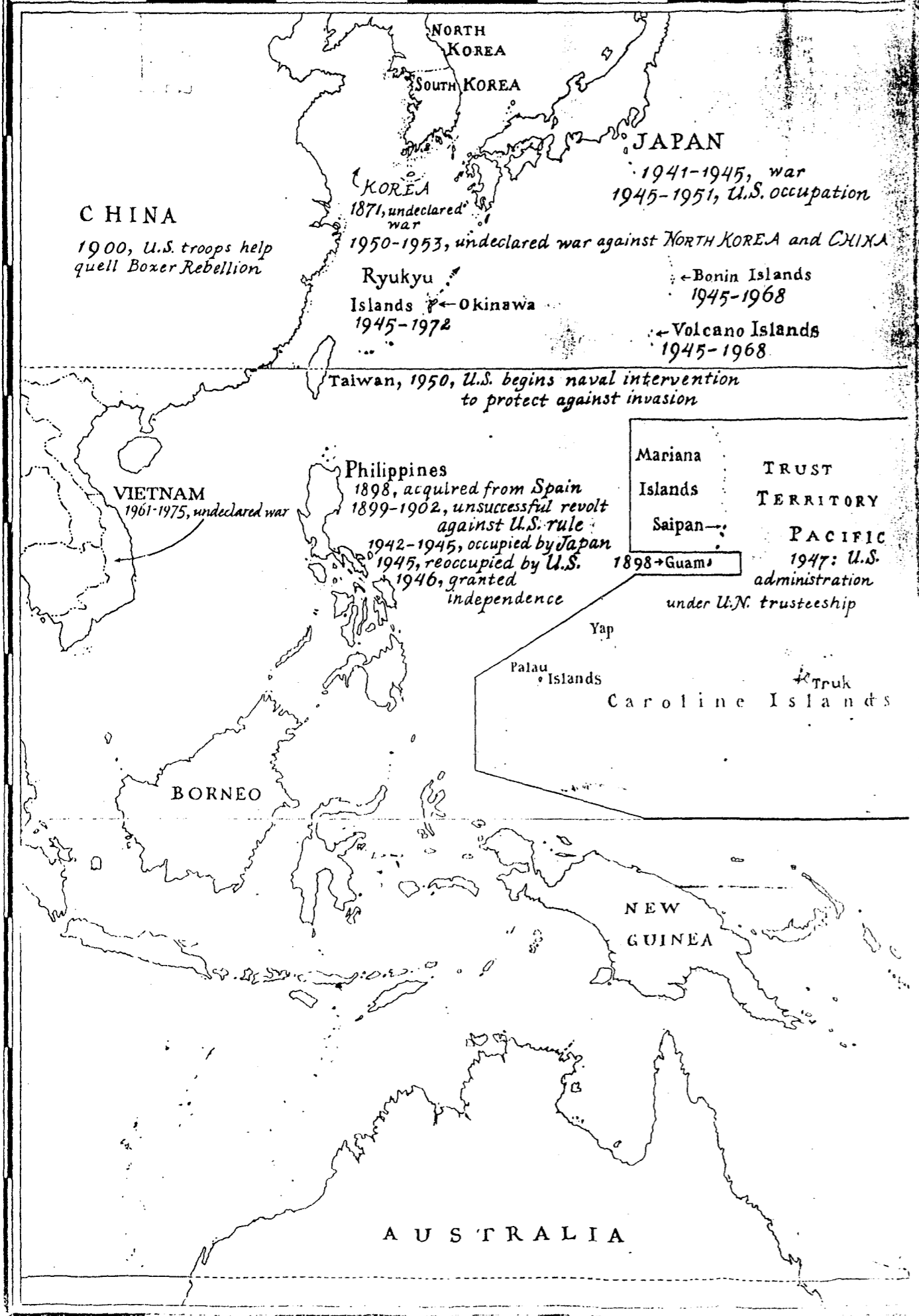
The Pacific War brought sweeping changes in the political structure of East Asia. The end of the 1940's found the area purged of most empires - Japanese and European. In this new vaccum the United States established itself as a super power, with its nuclear weapons and military bases linking islands in the Western Pacific. From 1945-1951 Japan was under United States occupation after which the United States continued to have important airforce and naval bases there; the Ryukyu Islands and

34 Russell Spurr, "Seventh Fleets New Asian Role", Far Eastern Economic Review (Hong Kong), vol. 96, 3 June 1977, p. 28.

Okinawa, Bonin Islands and Volcano islands passed within its fold in 1945; the Philippines was reoccupied by the United States in 1945 and a United States administration was established in the Mariana Islands, Yap, Palau Islands, Truk, Caroline Islands, Bikini, Eniwetok, Kwajalein and Marshall Islands.

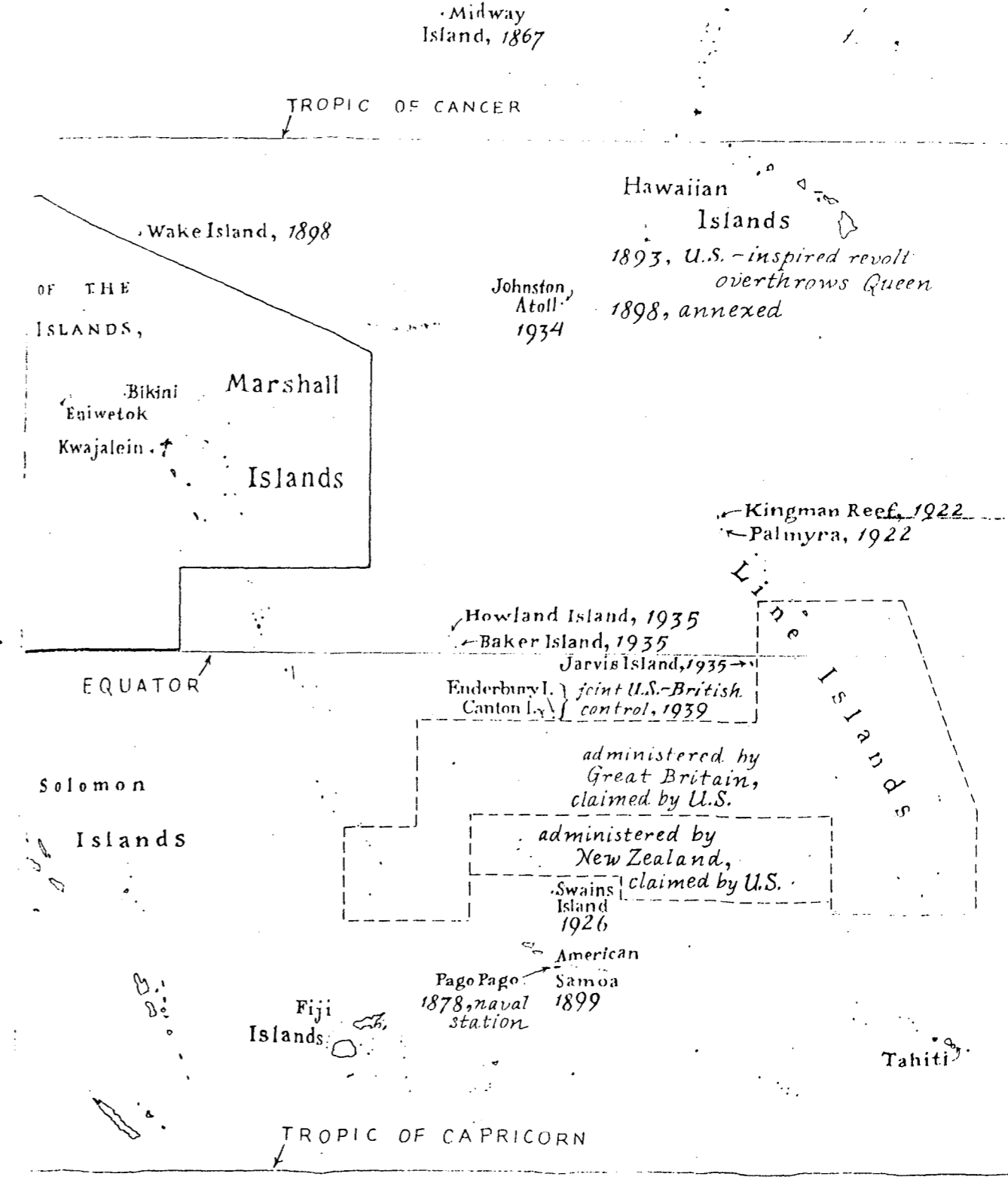
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CHAPTER II



THE UNITED STATES IN THE PACIFIC 1867 - 1975

Dates indicate the date of U.S. annexation or occupation



Source: Atlas of American History, rev. ed. (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978), pp 188-189

CHAPTER II

US PERSPECTIVE IN THE PACIFIC : 1945 TO THE DEBACLE IN VIETNAM

The Allied victory in the titanic struggle of the Second World War brought about, as an immediate aftermath, a momentary shift in the post war United States Pacific policy. In its moment of triumph in 1945, the United States wrongly assumed that because of the radical change in the balance of power in the Pacific there would be no need for active exercise of sea control and continued maintenance of its logistic bases to the same degree as during the war. A rather rapid demobilization ensued despite cautionary advise from many quarters. This trend was however reversed by several events. This chapter purports to examine these developments and show how the Korean War reestablished the validity of the cohesive maritime strategy, enunciated by Captain Alfred T. Mahan and followed in earlier years, and arrested the decline of force levels. This was to prove fortuitous as it stood the United States in good stead during the later conflict in Vietnam. Events during this period reiterated the need for the United States to safeguard its interests in the Pacific and brought to the fore the consequent requirement of a strong, balanced and well supported naval presence in this theatre.

Post-war American Vision of the Asia-Pacific Region

The "Victory Japan" day, August 1945 saw the United States at the zenith of its international prestige, political power and military strength. The war had however created a hitherto unreckoned rival on the international stage, namely the Soviet Union. Militarily the United States forces were in a state of great technological and material strength. In the Pacific, the United States navy could field a well balanced fleet with more than adequate ships of all types, manned by trained and seasoned crews and supported by a well organized chain of Pacific bases.

The situation can be considered to have lulled the United States planners into a mood of complacency in respect of the Pacific and East Asia. Post war reconstruction of Europe together with its political and economic ramifications and consequent jockeying with the Soviet Union, was the primary concern of United States planners and for a time Pacific affairs were allowed to occupy a back seat.

In this scenerio, American thought and policy regarding East Asia presupposed in the first place that a democratic China aligned with the United States would emerge as a strong power and replace Japan as a central force in Asia. Secondly, it was supposed, that the wartime accommodation with the Soviet Union would continue, enabling agreement on such issues as China, Japan and Korea and thirdly, that the

peoples of Asia would free themselves from colonial rule, a number of them subscribing to western style democracy.

In the post-war world, instead of co-operation and anticipated friendship, America and Russia found themselves opposing one another. The United States realized that there was a wide gap between the US and Soviet perceptions of a future Asia and this gap manifested itself in most of the concrete issues pertaining to China, Korea and Japan. Though, theoretically, the prevalent power imbalance favoured the United States since it was the only global power; the Soviet Union by virtue of its geographical proximity was in a position to effectively influence events in the East Asian and Pacific sphere. According to Robert Scalapino, an eminent American expert on the Far East, "the Soviet region was Eurasia and the broadest trends in the economic and political spheres abetted Soviet influence in such key regions as East Europe and China".¹

With respect to China and Japan the hope for compromise vanished though for a different reason. In 1949 when the Communists gained control of mainland China, America's position as well as the peace in the area came to be viewed more and more in connection with the idea of a resurgent

1 Robert A. Scalapino, "Competitive Strategic Perceptions Underlying U.S. Policy in Asia", in Llyod R. Vasey (ed), Pacific Asia and U.S. Policies: A Political-Economic-Strategic Assessment (Hawaii: University Press of Hawaii, 1978), p. 2.

Japan as the sheet anchor of their policies in the Pacific theatre.

In the case of decolonization as well there was a wide gap between American vision and post-war reality. The decolonization process was far from simple and rarely conducive to western style democracy. The Soviet Union taking advantage of the state of affairs in the region was able to extend its political influence beyond its strategic reach with minimal risk and cost. In the immediate post-war years the fear of Soviet expansionism brought out an American response aimed at containing Soviet political dominance within the regions of East Central Europe where it then existed and resisting its further spread. The opposing ideologies of the erstwhile allies crystallized into the 'Cold War'; which reached its height during the Berlin blockade, 1946. In Southeast Asia, the increase in guerrilla operations after 1947² were perceived in some quarters in the United States as part of a Soviet sponsored communist offensive; but this perception was not reflected in official United States policy.

United States involvements in East Asia during the immediate post-war years, extensive as they were, did not bring the United States into any direct conflict with the Soviet Union. The Truman Doctrine of March 1947 despite its

2 Some directed against colonial powers and others against emerging nationalist parties.

commitment to intervene everywhere in the world where governments might be threatened by communism, was limited to Greece and Turkey. "The emerging cold war, whatever its demands on American resources, remained a European phenomenon."³

Perhaps the comparative complacency with which America viewed the Far East was natural enough. Japan, which for two long generations had been the major threat to a balanced and stable Orient was an occupied nation; its military power broken. In China, even as Chiang Kai Shek went down to Mao Tse tung, the US Government did not recognize in the change of the regime in China any threat or danger to the US. The State Department's White Paper on China published in August 1949, publicly viewed the impending communist victory in China as a legitimate expression of popular approval and thus no real challenge to Asian stability. But, slowly what had appeared as an indigenous revolution began to loom, in American eyes, as possibly the initial triumph of Soviet aggression into the Asian sphere.⁴

3 Norman A. Graebner, "Global Containment : The Truman Years", Current History (Philadelphia), vol. 57, August 1969, p. 77.

4 According to Akira Iriye, "While officials were wary of Soviet expansion in East Asia, they did not believe that the Soviet Union would make China its satellite. The chance of a Russian-Chinese alliance would have caused American officials to reorient their thinking but they underrated such a possibility." Akira Iriye, Across the Pacific : An Inner History of American East Asian Relations (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967), p. 255.

In July 1949, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, designated Ambassador at large Philip Jessup to make recommendations for the formulation of an American strategy for Asia and instructed him as follows: "You will please take as your assumption that it is a fundamental decision of American foreign policy that the United States does not intend to permit further extension of communist domination on the continent of Asia or in Southeast Asia."⁵

However, despite a clamour by significant Republican Congressmen for extension of the "containment" doctrine to Asia there were ambivalent and conflicting trends in official American thought and reaction regarding the nature of the Chinese revolution. These were expressed in Acheson's noted speech before the National Press Club on 12 January 1950. He explained the fall of Chiang Kai Shek as an indigenous revolution and assured the nation that the Communist victory in China did not constitute a threat to the rest of Asia. He pointedly eliminated S. Korea, Formosa and Southeast Asia from the US defence perimeter. At the same time he recognized a Soviet power encroachment on China. But the final communist victory in China, and the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance in February 1950, propelled the

5 Norman A. Graebner, "Global Containment : The Truman Years", Current History (Philadelphia), vol. 57, August 1969, p. 78.

administration towards the extension of the containment principal to include the Far East. To meet the challenge of Communist aggression in Asia, Acheson stressed the importance of President Truman's new programme of military and economic aid to the free nations along the Chinese periphery.

Naval Developments in the Pacific

The United States emerged from World War II as the foremost naval power in the world essentially unopposed by any likely foe. However, almost all its attention was focussed on the defence of Europe and consequently the prospects of maintaining the wartime strength of the US Navy in the Far East were not too bright.

The moment of victory in the Pacific found US suffering from a shortage of seapower in the midst of plenty. The defeat of Japan was one thing; simultaneous occupation of key points along the Asian littoral was quite another. Since all amphibious lift was needed for the occupation of the Japanese islands, peripheral areas had to wait. It was some time before ships became available, Lieutenant General John R. Hodges was embarked at Okinawa and a group of seventh fleet transports prepared to land occupation forces in Korea on 8 September 1945.

Moreover, the end of the Second World War brought about military reorganization in the US and there were

proposals for reduction in "seapower" by those unfamiliar with its potentialities and those who believed that all subsequent wars would be land wars. "Increasingly as the months passed, the defence establishment was developing along lines unsuited to a maritime strategy and alarming to senior naval officers."⁶

According to Rear Admiral John D. Hayes, US Navy (Retd),

with the closing of the war came rapid demobilization and within a few years the army was down to about half a million half-trained men spread thinly around the world. The armed services engaged in an internecine struggle over unification, and a national security policy of "nuclear deterrence" based on the then atomic monopoly, combined to offer the old isolationism in a new form. 7

In October 1949 Congressional Hearings were begun and two points emerged fairly clearly from the testimony of naval witnesses. The fact that the type of armed force embodied in the navy and marine corps was being whittled down to a dangerous level was emphasized in the testimony of three major fleet commanders, the commandant of the marine corps and the chief of naval operations. A second point,

6 James A. Field Jr., History of United States Naval Operations : Korea (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962), p. 29.

7 John D. Hayes, "Patterns of American Sea Power, 1945-56 : Their Portents for the Seventies", United States Naval Institute Proceedings (Annapolis, Maryland), vol. 96, May 1970, p. 337.

repeatedly made, was that the navy was not accepted as an equal partner in the unification process and while the documentation was unnecessarily weak, this contention received strong^{if} surprising confirmation in the bitter and partisan rebuttal delivered by General Omar N. Bradley US Army, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff.⁸

Fortunately, the strategic interests of the United States were not entirely ignored. In the Far East, the Philippines received their promised independence in 1946, but American bases remained. Okinawa became the geographical keystone of a maritime strategy for control of the Western Pacific, and the Soviets were excluded from participation in the occupation of Japan. A valient fight by the navy's professional officers led by Secretary of the navy James Forrestal saved naval aviation.

At the end of the war the Soviet Navy was in a paradoxical situation. The war had been heavy in terms of both manpower and industry; it included in addition ship losses, wrecked internal waterways, ports and other industrial facilities on which seapower depends. Added to these debits was a poor war record as far as "sea activity" was concerned. Yet in the Soviet eyes this was not the dominant side of the record. So far from soft peddling

8 For details see James A. Field Jr., History of United States Naval Operations : Korea (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1962), pp. 29-34.

the naval war record Soviet leaders made exaggerated claims of wartime successes to raise the service morale. "Official propaganda was contrived to convince the Russians that they were a naturally maritime people with lofty naval traditions."⁹ After the Second World War the Soviet Union fully appreciated the fact that a strong navy was an essential requisite of an aspirant super power. Soviet naval planners accordingly prepared the blueprints to create a truly effective navy and embarked on a colossal construction programme at the time when the United States was engaged in pruning down its naval forces.

The Far Eastern naval frontier of Russia almost annihilated in 1905 was restored after the Bolshevik Revolution in so short a period of time that by 1922 the USSR was moving its Red Army into Vladivostok. By 1945, through the terms of the Russo-Chinese Treaty that year, the Soviet Union was able to recover a considerable degree of naval security which Russia had possessed before its disastrous conflict with the rising power of Japan. Both Russia and China were to use Port Arthur but Russia's dominating position (due to having 3 of 5 Soviet members regulating the use of the port) gave it command of the seaward approaches to all of north China. Since the

9 Donald W. Mitchell, A History of Russian and Soviet Sea Power (Great Britain: Andre' Deutsch, 1974), p. 469.

communist conquest of China, Moscow had sought to increase Russian naval security in the Far East. According to the Moscow-Peiping Alliance made public on 16 February 1950, China agreed to place seven of its most coveted ports under Soviet supervision in the event of a war. These included Port Arthur and Port Darien.

With their limited involvement in the Pacific phase of the war, the Russians obtained extremely generous territorial concessions which allowed them to occupy northern Korea and Manchuria and to annex outright Sakhalin and the Kurile Island chain. The strategically vital Kurile islands were oceanic fortresses which not only enabled the Russians to maintain communications with their strong naval bases at Petropavlovsk but also act as a defence for Sakhalin.

As soon as possible the country resumed a policy of naval modernization and expansion. "There is no doubt that a renaissance of Soviet Sea Power has started since World War II."¹⁰ In 1945 in connection with the observance of Red Navy Day Stalin said: "The Soviet people wish to see their navy stronger and mightier".¹¹ It was felt that Stalin's decision to develop a large surface fleet "reflected

10 Hanston W. Baldwin, "The Soviet Navy", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 33, July 1955, p. 599.

11 Lt Thaddeus V. Tuleja, "The Historic Pattern of Russian Naval Policy", United States Naval Institute Proceedings (Annapolis, Maryland), vol. 77, September 1951, p. 963.

a desire to expand Soviet influence between the existing boundaries and coastal seas of the 'camp of socialism'." ¹²

Soviet naval developments did not go unnoticed in United States naval quarters; they were seen as detrimental to US interests and numerous warning notes were sounded in an attempt to get the government pay more attention to its policy in the Far East.

In an article in the prestigious journal Foreign Affairs, in February 1950 Lt Edward E. Wilcox wrote: "Our back door in the Pacific today stands open to a potential aggressor. Must we wait until the dropping of bombs (perhaps on Okinawa) signal the commencement of open hostilities or shall we now take protective measures as are necessary for defence." ¹³ Emphasizing that communism was on the march not only in China but in East and Southeast Asian countries in which the US had heavy interests, he warned that the spectre of military and naval necessity haunts the scene. "We today, are potentially and from the standpoint of ships in being the mightiest naval power in the world. This potential is beyond the ability of any power or any combination of

12 Paul H. Nitze and others, Securing the Seas: The Soviet Naval Challenge and Western Alliance Options (Boulder: Colorado; Westview Press, 1979), p. 37.

13 Lt. Edward E. Wilcox, "Back Door in the Pacific", United States Naval Institute Proceedings (Annapolis, Maryland), vol. 76, February 1950, p. 187.

powers to resist. But our present weakness in ships and men in the Pacific leaves us in jeopardy."¹⁴

It was quite apparent that Russia would find it difficult to create a surface fleet equal to that of the US. But the danger was seen in its trying to neutralize American sea power. "The real danger from the Soviet navy will not come from any number of its major and minor war vessels but from its formidable undersea fleet which was begun under the first five year plan."¹⁵

In June 1947, Admiral Louis E. Denfeld, then Pacific Commander, said that a considerable number of Russian submarines were operating in the North Pacific. Submarine activity by an aggressor in the South China Sea, the East China Sea, the Philippine Sea or the Pacific itself could disrupt the American supply line to Japan not only to meet civilian needs but the more important logistic commitment created by the presence of US forces in the area.

As a sea power Russia had one important weakness which was that she had no central fleet on which to fall back for support when faced with strong concentration of US

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 188.

¹⁵ Lt Thaddeus V. Tuleja, "The Historic Pattern of Russian Naval Policy", United States Naval Institute Proceedings (Annapolis, Maryland), vol. 77, September 1951, p. 966.

forces and so it could hardly hope to garner the full fruits of sea power; namely, to use the sea in all far reaching ways which sea power confers on a power who possesses it. But with its large number of submarines and its gigantic airforce Russia could have caused very heavy ship losses and injury to US bases. The defence of bases, both sea and air is as important as the defence of sea routes for without sea bases sea power loses one of its essential parts. It was suggested, therefore, that those bases should be equipped in peace with weapons which modern conditions imposed. In this context Admiral Dickens advised:

Not only must we possess numerous strategic bases along the sea routes but we must in war destroy or smash those of the enemy. But there is something of vital importance bearing on this matter which must give us the greatest pre-occupation now, that is the spread of communism in the Far East. Whatever happens, Hong Kong and Singapore, Korea, Formosa and the East Indian Islands must not become available to Russia. On our policy as regards the future of Japan much of momentous importance depends. 16

Thus many US quarters voiced the imperative necessity to evolve a coherent strategy to deal with the impending threat that Russians might be able to strike out with telling effect unless her future adverseries were able

¹⁶ Admiral Sir Gerald Dickens, "Sea Power in a War with Russia", United States Naval Institute Proceedings (Annapolis, Maryland), vol. 76, October 1950, p. 1070.

to match Soviet power with adequate weapons of defence. It was widely felt that the US should strengthen its navy in the Western Pacific; reactivate the necessary ships and air squadrons and find the men to man them; a convoy doctrine suited to the needs of the area was required as a standard operating measure; and submarine counter operation plans was ^{to} be readied and the airforce strengthened.

Despite a large number of opinions reflecting the importance of the Far Eastern theatre and the need for the development of American naval strength in the area, the interaction of the budget ceiling and strategic plan had led to long range bombardment and the European theatre, an emphasis reflected in the deployment of American strength. The ground forces were divided between the continent of Europe, the continent of the United States and occupation duty in Japan. The navy's larger half was in the Atlantic. The weight of the strategic air command and of the other airforce units lay at home and in the forward European bases. On the assumption that the first and most important communist objective was Western Europe, it may be said that this deployment proved itself. But for the war that did come in Korea (1950) this posture was more than a little awkward. The Korean War was instrumental in halting the attrition of US naval forces in the Pacific and drove home to the US strategic planners that Mahan's concept of

safeguarding US interests in the Pacific region could only be realized through a strong well supported navy.

The Korean War and the United States Navy

Late in June 1950 the Asian containment policies of the United States required a commitment of forces in South Korea to prevent its annexation by communist led North Korea. Within the context of the conceptualization of communist led aggression in Asia, the rationale for US involvement in Korea was simple enough. But more than the independence of Korea was at stake. To the Truman administration and to those that were striving to halt the attrition of US forces in the Pacific, the North Korean invasion of South Korea provided proof of Soviet imperialist designs on Asia. To do nothing would have been tantamount to acknowledging the communist power altering the status quo with impunity and would have revealed America's lack of determination to resist communist expansion. The Chinese intervention in the war seemed to reveal that China in addition to the Soviet Union posed a threat to peace and if the threat went unchallenged, not only the peace in the world but America's own security and interests would be jeopardized.

The Korean conflict silenced the demand for force reductions and all quarters unanimously agreed on the need for the United States to maintain a strong presence in the

Pacific. In an article on Korea in Foreign Affairs, Adlai Stevenson, distinguished lawyer, journalist and later US ambassador to the United Nations wrote: "One of the men who took part in the long and anxious meeting at Blair House gave the simplest explanation of the decision, 'this attack on South Korea is like Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland'." ¹⁷ As the President expressed it, "if the free countries had acted together to crush the aggression of the dictators and if they had acted in the beginning when the aggression was small there probably would have been no World War II". ¹⁸

The Korean War during which the danger of a direct clash with Russia in Europe reached its peak, again demonstrated the values of maritime support for land operations in limited war both in flanking carrier borne air support and at Inchon in an amphibious counter stroke.

Fortunately for the United States, at the time of the outbreak of the Korean War, it was in occupation of Japan which provided a secure advanced base close to the theatre of operations from where frontline forces could be

17 Adlai Stevenson, "Korea in Perspective", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 30, April 1952, p. 350.

18 Leiut. Cdr. Samuel S. Stratton, "Korea : Acid Test of Containment", United States Naval Institute Proceedings (Annapolis, Maryland), vol. 78, March 1952, p. 242.

effectively maintained. Further, the US navy was still in a position to establish, in part, the command of the Pacific Ocean through which the US lines of supply and communication extended to the American mainland and of the seas adjacent to the scene of land operation.¹⁹

The first task of the US navy in Korea was to maintain control of the seas. The second was to use that control. The first task the US navy had accomplished five years before, during World War II. Its control of the sea was never challenged by communist forces although this possibility was even present with US ships operating a few hundred miles from the Soviet submarine base at Vladivostok and within the range of the numerous air bases in Siberia. The lines of communication and supply in the Pacific Ocean could certainly not have been maintained had the US navy not controlled the Pacific Ocean.

The second task was a double one. First, land forces, ground and air, had to be positioned on the enemy coasts and thereafter supported from overseas and secondly, the enemy was to be denied the sea for support of their own forces by blockade. The first of these was done well in the Korean War; the second was never attempted.²⁰

19 Since the onset of the Cold War, US maritime strategy emphasized sea control and power projection as a natural outgrowth of the doctrine of containment directed against the Soviet Union.

20 For a detailed account of the denial of the seas' use to the enemy see the Joint Senate Committee's MacArthur Hearings on the Military situation in the Far East. 3 May-27 June 1951.

According to Rear Admiral John D. Hayes, US Navy (Retd), "the rights of blockade and of visit and search of merchant ships, permitted by international law to a belligerent in war, were never exercised in the Korean War against China, on the ground that there had been no formal declaration of war between the two nations".²¹

The Korean War was an important example of the evolution of the naval mission of projection of ground forces from the sea on to the land. World War II had witnessed an unprecedented increase in the amphibious capacity of US forces. It was America's great fortune that this amphibious capability though mutilated in the years immediately after World War II, nevertheless by remnants and improvisation could still serve in Korea. The Inchon assault in Korea in September 1950 was a bold tactical manoeuvre. The Inchon gamble paid off and is remembered as one of the most successful amphibious operations in military history. Commenting on the landing General MacArthur,²² Commander of the United Nations Forces in the

21 Rear Admiral John D. Hayes, US Navy (Retd), "Patterns of American Sea Power, 1945-56: Their Portents for the Seventies", United States Naval Institute Proceedings (Annapolis, Maryland), vol. 96, May 1970, p. 346.

22 For General MacArthur's account of the Korean war, see, Douglas MacArthur, Reminiscences (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964).

Far East said, "the navy and marines have never shone as brightly as this morning".²³

Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble's US Seventh Fleet with British warships attached, was instrumental in ensuring the successful operations of the Eighth Army in Korea. Throughout the war, Seventh Fleet surface vessels kept the seaside east coast road and railroad unusable for supplying the North Korean army, which thus became heavily dependent on the roads and railroad passing through Seoul on the other side of the mountains. Task Force 77, the carrier force, joined US Air Force bombers in blasting hangers, fuel storage depots, refineries, bridges and marshalling yards in North Korea, and in completely destroying the small North Korean airforce. The carrier planes then shifted to close support of the Eighth Army, a function for which air force pilots were not trained. So effective was the close air support that the North Koreans at length abandoned day time offensives as too costly.

According to some opinions expressed, while sea power saved the day in Korea it would have been helpless without land troops. "Korea is a lesson in the fact that

23 Quoted in E.B. Potter, Illustrated History of the United States Navy (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1971), p. 272.

all military power is land power and can be exercised only by skilful combination and concentration of all weapons whether airborne, seaborne or earthborne."²⁴ While it would not be wrong to say that the dominant factor at every stage of the Korean War was the closest possible teaming of all armies and services, in no way should this be taken to mean that the navy played anything other than a very significant role in the Korean War.

The role of the US navy in the Korean War disproved the theory that with the development of the atom bomb seapower had come to lose the significance it claimed as an element of national security.²⁵ Korea demonstrated once again, that the US needed a navy to win the war. "Once again, saluting the proud power of our navy, we have come to learn that the mysterious and distant sea was still to play a heroic role in the destiny of America."²⁶

The all pervading influence of the sea was present even where no major landing or retreat or reinforcement

24 Walter Millis, "Sea Power : Abstraction or Asset", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 29, April 1951, p. 374.

25 The war was fought to its end with conventional weapons. The strategic air command turned out to be the shield rather than the sword of strategy, and as a limiting rather than expanding agent wholly justified, if in an unexpected manner its great cost.

26 Lt Thaddeus V. Tuleja, "The Historic Pattern of Russian Naval Policy", United States Naval Institute Proceedings (Annapolis, Maryland), vol. 77, September 1951, p. 959.

highlighted its effect. Yet it must be kept in mind that throughout the war the US navy had little opposition on the water; and perhaps because Korea was a war fought without large naval battles it is easy to fail to recognize the decisive role navies played in this war. Nonetheless, elaborating on the point, Field writes: "The U.S. and the U.N. stopped aggression through the sound exercise of the control of the sea. This power is, of course only one facet of national power and itself, alone, could not assure victory in the Korean War, if in any war; yet loss of it would have assured certain defeat."²⁷ Admiral Robert B. Carney, US Navy, commenting on the situation said: "True, we were never faced by determined naval opposition. But this in itself was of vast significance....Without a mastery of the surrounding seas, the allied position would have been virtually hopeless."²⁸

This is not to say that the US had, during the Korean War either very good base facilities, or indeed an impressive naval strength. However, if forces, bases and

27 James A. Field Jr., History of United States Naval Operations : Korea (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962), p. 6.

28 Quoted in Captain Carl H. Amme U.S. Navy (ret'd), "Seapower and the Super Powers", United States Naval Institute Proceedings (Annapolis, Maryland), vol. 94, October 1968, p. 31.

plans alike seemed inadequate to the challenge of communist aggression, there were certain mitigating factors. To employ force whether for police action or for war, on the far side of the ocean, is an exercise in maritime power for which fighting strength, bases and shipping are essential. Unplanned for though the emergency was, a sufficient concentration was still possible. The occupation forces in Japan contained a large fraction - four of ten army divisions - of American ground strength. FEAF's air strength was by no means inconsiderable. Naval forces in the Far East could be reinforced, from the West Coast in the first instance, in time from elsewhere. Limited though fleet bases were, in the larger context the base was Japan, and the metropolis of Asia offered many advantages in the form of airfields, staging areas, industrial strength and skilled labour. Also, Japan had a sizable merchant marine which could augment the carrying capacity.

Yet in an overall estimate, from the beginning to the end of the war the navy operated on a shoestring with limited strength, obsolescent types and very marginal supporting organization. While the speed and size of the reinforcement were impressive, base facilities in the Far East were minimal; and while all available ships were committed to the Korean theatre, these proved no more than sufficient for the war that did develop. Delayed deployment

would have meant the loss of the Korean foothold; further opposition would have meant a very different war. All these factors went to underline the fact that if the US was to guard its vital interests in the region, it was imperative that it look to matters concerning the increase of naval strength and base facilities in the Far East.

Security Alliances and the Doctrine of
Massive Retaliation

In the earlier part of the twentieth century the United States required bases in the Pacific ocean more for the protection of its commercial interests. By the time of the Korean War the United States perceived the need to check what it believed to be communist desire for expansion. "In its heyday 'containment' demanded the forward deployment of U.S. ground, air and naval forces to key points around Eurasia; as well as the forces of friendly countries along those peripheries."²⁹ An integral ingredient of US forward deployment strategy was the development of a large and integrated system of overseas bases and support facilities. This network of overseas bases, was designed to provide residual military strong points around the periphery of Eurasian land mass. By means of the basing arrangement and fostering of allies in

29 Alvin J. Cottrell and Thomas H. Moorer, "U.S. Overseas Bases : Problems of Projecting American Military Power Abroad", The Washington Papers (Beverly Hills and London), vol. V, 1977, p. 6.

the Pacific region the United States hoped to maintain a credible deterrent to aggression directed against US interests.

Beginning in 1951, the US began to forge a system of political-military alliances in the Asia-Pacific area to provide some "security" for the developing nations of the region and by linking them to the US to ward off or contain the threat of communism. In this context, special ambassador John Foster Dulles told the UN Association of Japan on 23 April 1951, that "the United States does not intend to abandon Asia and is taking concrete steps to build up a multi purpose security arrangement".³⁰

Apart from the Treaty of Peace signed between 48 allied powers and Japan, the US signed security treaties with Australia and New Zealand (1 September 1951), the Philippines (30 August 1951) and Japan (8 September 1951). According to John Foster Dulles "from our standpoint, the arrangements which we have been considering add up to a determination - with the concurrence and help of the peoples concerned - to make safe the offshore island chain which swings south through Japan, the Ryukyus, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand".³¹ In addition, he

30 Quoted in Ben C. Limb, "Pacific Pact : Looking Forward or Backward?", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 29, July 1951, p. 539.

31 John Foster Dulles, "Security in the Pacific", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 30, 30 January 1952, p. 182.

said the President has declared that "the United States will not permit the status of Formosa now the seat of the National Government of China to be changed by force, and the Pacific Fleet has been instructed accordingly".³² The sum total was an impressive development of US policy and a formidable deterrent^{cc} in the Pacific against Communist imperialism.³³

Elaborating on the Soviet threat to Asia, Dulles wrote that Stalin proclaimed in 1925, that the amalgamation of the Asian peoples into the political orbit of the Soviet Union was a primary goal of Soviet policy and that Asia was the road to victory in the West and that with Japan the Soviet Union would "be invincible". According to Dulles -

While no one can predict the plans of the politburo, nothing has happened in the past twenty five years to suggest any basic deviation from the strategy....It is in Asia that Russian imperialism finds its most powerful expression. The counter-measures taken in 1951 have been good, but they are not good enough to justify a mood of relaxation. We must go forward to achieve greater unity and greater strength. 34

32 Ibid., p. 182.

33 It must be pointed out that the security treaties made involve only islands where the security is strongly influenced by sea and air power.

34 John Foster Dulles, "Security in the Pacific", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 30, January 1952, p. 187.

The US also made large commitments of military aid to France and the Associated States of Indo-China as they carried the main burden of containment in Southeast Asia. However, it was evident that the globalization of containment would produce diminishing returns even as the policy unfolded. In Asia, as opposed to Europe, containment was more a matter of political as against military effectiveness, for no government that failed to establish a base would long remain in power whatever moral and physical support it received from the US. The military structures of these countries were not strong enough to resist aggression and far exceeded in cost what Asian economies could support. They were to become an endless financial drain for the US. However, global containment responding to the challenge of an insatiable communist monolith, elevated every communist led manoeuvre to first level importance even where the US strategic interests were unclear and strategic considerations unfavourable. To further their policies the US set up military bases in Thailand and South Vietnam.

The strategic significance of the peninsula and the continuing nature of the US perceived communist threat led to the formation of the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954. SEATO was mainly backed by US naval strength in the area.³⁵ "In the cockpit the main burden is on the

35 For a detailed discussion on SEATO and the US role see Col. Joe M. Palmer, "SEATO Reexamined", Military Review (Kansas), vol. 67, February 1967, pp. 82-91.

United States...the backbone of SEATO comes from the U.S. 7th Fleet whose forces have been augmented and whose aircraft carriers, warships and transports have been very vital in the Vietnam flare up. Behind this fleet is the nuclear deterrent, functioning as much as it does in Europe."³⁶

In December 1954, the US signed a bilateral mutual defence treaty with the Republic of China.

The doctrine of massive retaliation became the strategic concept synonymous with the Eisenhower approach to military policy. In a statement to the Council on Foreign Relations, ~~by~~ Secretary of State John Foster Dulles on 12 January 1954, less than a year after the Korean War, Dulles said that in future the United States would "respond to challenges at places and with means of its own choosing"³⁷ and suggested that if there was a communist attack at some point on the periphery the US must use "massive retaliatory power". In other words, he was suggesting that henceforth if the enemy attacked some point on the periphery of Asia, the US might respond by using massive retaliatory power rather than by meeting them there on an unfavourable battlefield.

36 Wg. Cdr M. Chopra, "Southeast Asia : A Mosaic", Military Review (Kansas), vol. 63 , January 1963, p. 23.

37 W.W. Kaufmann, ed., Military Policy and National Security (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 24.

The doctrine of massive retaliation came under severe criticism from many sources. Among others, W.W. Kaufmann argued for larger conventional forces on the peripheral areas to give greater credibility to the US willingness to intervene and forestall enemy military action.

Yet, according to Cottrell, looking back on the situation at that time, the doctrine made sense despite its deficiencies for meeting the full spectrum of potential conflict. "Some such doctrine was needed to try to deter further local military aggression in Asia and to compensate for the lack of the requisite will to undertake military commitments".³⁸

The solution for the Eisenhower administration seemed to be in the realm of the strategy of deterrence. During his office the US military advisory group in Vietnam numbered well under thousand, the escalation of commitment came later. The fact remains that with the exception of Vietnam where the war was already in progress the Eisenhower strategy for Asia did not require US intervention. At the same time the ambiguity of the Eisenhower military commitment in Asia undoubtedly was more realistic, given the lack of support for direct intervention.

³⁸ Alvin J. Cottrell, "The Eisenhower Era in Asia", Current History (Philadelphia), vol. 37, August 1969, p. 87.

The War in Vietnam and the US Naval Role

The strengthening of US naval forces in the Pacific and the reactivation and rejuvenation of its supporting bases brought about by the Korean conflict stood the US in good stead in Vietnam.

In Vietnam, the US was opposed by the communist forces of Dr Ho Chi Minh, who had earlier received US assistance while resisting Japanese occupation forces in 1940-45 and who later resisted French reoccupation after the Japanese withdrawal. Ho Chi Minh first established control of North Vietnam and then strove to extend his sway over the rest of the country. This move was resisted by the French.

Without much thought on the long term political wisdom of supporting a corrupt South Vietnamese government without popular support, the US as a part of their strategy of global containment of communism aided the French. Whereas control of the adjoining sea was easily established, a new dimension was added when the US naval control was sought to be extended to the inland rivers and waterways of Vietnam.

The first permanent US naval presence in Vietnam was established in August 1950, soon after the outbreak of the Korean War, when the naval section of Military Assistance Advisory Group Indo-China was formed. In the fall of that year a joint state defence survey mission visited Vietnam.

They recommended that since there was no apparent threat to the French in IndoChina from the sea, the American naval aid programme should be concentrated on the build-up of river and coastal forces of employment against Vietminh insurgents.

Among specific recommendations was included the supply of a variety of small ships and craft for extending the offshore patrol into coastal waters, and for broadening the scope of river operations. "With a little modification, these early recommendations shaped the broad direction of our naval programme in Vietnam for the next fourteen years."³⁹

US involvement and actions in Vietnam escalated as the intensity of the communist assaults increased. The insurgency problem assumed serious proportions in 1959 when it became apparent to many observers that increased US military aid would be required if the independence of the south was to be preserved. In the following months additional equipment was supplied to the Vietnamese navy. In June Admiral Arleigh Burke, Chief of Naval Operations, cited an "urgent need for the U.S. Navy to prepare to assume responsibility in restricted waters and rivers".⁴⁰

39 R.L. Schreadley, "The Naval War in Vietnam, 1950-1970", United States Naval Institute Proceedings (Annapolis, Maryland), vol. 97, May 1971, p. 182.

40 Ibid., p. 184.

In spite of greatly increased levels of military assistance, the morale of South Vietnamese forces continued to deteriorate. Further, because of the undeclared nature of the war, the US was hesitant to escalate the scale and zones of conflict. The possibility of Chinese involvement also added to this hesitancy. The US Navy was not permitted to exercise naval blockade of North Vietnam till at a much later stage in the war and when this was permitted it was more to boost the sagging morale of South Vietnamese forces rather than to achieve any great tactical or strategic advantage. In any event, the escalation was never a sustained effort. This was due to the contributory effect of conflicting intelligence reports which led to false appreciation as well as political indecision over the desirability of escalating the war in support of a weak and corrupt regime in South Vietnam.

Escalation began in December 1961 when US air, sea and ground forces began to play a limited operational role in Vietnam. Late in February 1962 operations began in the Gulf of Thailand, between the Phu Quoc island and the Ca Mau Peninsula, with US navy destroyer escorts participating.

In October 1962, on the recommendation of a survey made by the President's special military advisor, General Maxwell Taylor, project "Beef Up" was launched; which, in addition to more men, money and supplies for the military,

called for increased US operational participation in the war. Despite the project, 1963 did not bring a dramatic reversal of the situation, and South Vietnam continued to plunge into political chaos, culminating in the murder of President Diem that year.

On 2 October 1963, Secretary of Defence Robert McNamara and General Maxwell D. Taylor then Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, reported to the President with regard to Vietnam that "the major part of the military task can be completed by the end of 1965, although there may be a continuing requirement for a limited number of U.S. training personnel".⁴¹

The alleged attack on the US destroyer Maddox in the Tonkin Gulf which resulted in the sinking of two patrol craft of the North Vietnamese navy and aerial bombing of the patrol torpedo boat bases in early August 1964, signalled a new and dramatically different phase of the war in Vietnam. "Cautious optimism" remained the official appraisal until early 1965, when the Johnson administration after obtaining power from the Congress "to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the US. and to prevent further aggression", expanded the war in a series of actions. The first of these measures was the bombing of North Vietnam in early February 1965. Later in

41 Department of State Bulletin, October 21, 1963, p. 623.

February, the US began using jet bombers inside South Vietnam for strikes against Viet Cong targets. The big American ground force buildup began shortly afterwards, and the US acknowledged on June 9 that it was committing combat troops in Vietnam.

The combat troops were able to develop and defend bases as ordered - Da Nang, Phu Bai, Chu Lai. They also extended their operations, supporting and at length conducting "search and destroy" operations of their own. Some of their attacks on the coastal nests of Vietcong were carried out in conjunction with amphibious assaults by special landing forces of the Seventh fleet. Seventh fleet vessels bombarded positions near the coasts of both north and south Vietnam. A further step in the escalation came on June 17, when American B-52 strategic bombers from Guam began attacking reported Vietcong installations and areas with heavy conventional bombs.

In an attempt to check large scale communist infiltration, operation "Market Time" was launched in March 1965, its primary mission being "to conduct surveillance, gunfire support, visit and search, and other operations as directed along the coast of the Republic of Vietnam in order to assist the Republic^{of} Vietnam in detection and prevention of communist infiltration from the sea".⁴²

42 R.L. Schreadley, "The Naval War in Vietnam, 1950-1970", United States Naval Institute Proceedings (Annapolis, Maryland), vol. 97, May 1971, p. 190.

Operating under Commander US Naval forces Vietnam were a coastal and river patrol. The former comprising US navy and coastguard vessels, cooperated with the South Vietnamese navy in preventing the enemy from using coastal waters for moving troops and supplies. The latter operated with the US army in denying the Vietcong use of the rivers in Saigon area and the nearby Mekong Delta. The joint river force was designated the army-Navy-Mobile-Riverine Force.

However, as 'Market Time' throttled infiltration from the sea, the communists simply shifted their principal supply lines to inland routes, which crossed the borders from supposedly "neutral" Cambodia and Laos. The interdiction effort that had been directed against these routes was concentrated on the major rivers, and might be likened to an attempt to stem the flow of water through a seive by the tactic of inserting a limited number of needles in selected openings in the seive, effective locally, but virtually useless overall. The communists merely moved to smaller waterways when they were forced off larger rivers.

Despite all these reverses US troops were able to carve out safe enclaves in the vicinity of major cities and bases, where the insurgents could not penetrate except by extreme covert means. At one time the United States had 543,000 combatants in Vietnam but on no occasion was

there any fear that this force could not be maintained and supplied with its multifarious needs, no matter how remotely situated. In addition, suppliers for the 800,000 strong South Vietnamese army and 68,000 other allied troops were catered for without interruption. The 'Sea Power' of the United States made possible one of history's longest supply lines. 96 per cent of the immense quantities of materials delivered to support the Vietnam War came by sea. The bases helped them cover and change forces. Aircraft carriers off the coast of Vietnam were in close contact with the land troops. They acted as artillery platforms and floating airfields to bombard enemy positions.

Summarizing the role of the US navy in Vietnam Admiral Schreadley wrote:

A rare application of sea power was developed on the rivers and canals of the Delta, the waterways of I Corps, and along the length of the Vietnamese coast. A new family of fighting craft appeared, newly built or adapted from older boats in our inventory. New basing and support concepts were created. New tactics were devised, new strategies were tested. New task forces were put together to help fight a war that was in many respects a completely alien experience for the modern American sailor. 43

Although public opinion in the US wearied of the long conflict and eventually forced the government to negotiate and end the war, the US was able to sustain this

43 Ibid., p. 209.

largest and most bitter conflict in its history, more than 3,000 miles from its shores only because it had complete command of the seas in the Pacific theatre in all respects. Without its preponderance of naval strength and the bases to support it, US options would have been severely restricted. Despite having command of the sea the United States lost the war because of the determined resistance of the Vietnamese people. The navy could only offer a supportive role. This in itself was inadequate to win the war. However, were it not for its sea power the United States would not have been able to last as long as it did and the war would have ended sooner. Command of the sea helped postpone the day of disaster.

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CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III

US PACIFIC POLICY: THE POST-VIETNAM REPUBLICAN YEARS

The United States in a Changed Global Setting

For twenty-five years after the World War II, America's security in the Pacific area was guided by a series of premises that were based on a broad policy consensus. Whether they were subsumed under the "containment strategy" of the Truman Eisenhower period or the "forward strategy" of the Kennedy Johnson period, these premises were related to the pervasive struggle between the western world and the socialist states.

When the Nixon administration took office in January 1969, the old premises had become largely irrelevant to the emerging global situation. The political configuration in the western Pacific had changed considerably. The United States was confronted with the prospect of declining leverage and influence with its allies in the Pacific. Many fundamental changes more than any single dramatic event, ushered in the new era in the region and helped reshape US goals.

Important among these changes was economic growth which gave individual countries more flexibility in their military planning in comparison with the time when they

were heavily dependent on American military assistance to finance their defence establishment. The Sino-Soviet split and the breakdown of bipolarity that characterized international security affairs throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, gave way to a new multipolar balance and diversification of power. The emergence of resource, energy and other problems created new policy conflicts and political alliances among both the developed and the underdeveloped countries of the Pacific Basin; and there were visible signs of a growth of nationalism, increased self confidence and growing cooperation amongst the countries in this region.

At a level more directly involving the United States, the Vietnam problem acquired serious proportions. As the domestic frustration and anger in the United States came to be focussed on the costs and conduct of the Vietnam war, the American consensus on a comprehensive containment policy in Asia began to crumble - at least as it applied to Southeast Asia where it seemed to many to imply an open ended commitment to countries of secondary importance and to causes of questionable relevance to American security. The lesson of Vietnam for many Americans, therefore became "not that American policy in Asia should be one of incriminating involvement, but rather one of indiscriminate disengagement".¹

1 Leslie H. Brown, American Security Policy in Asia, Adelphi Papers No. 132 (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, Spring 1977), p. 3.

The domestic revolt over American involvement in Southeast Asia threatened to destroy the whole structure of the US security policy: the alliance system, the concepts of collective defence, of military assistance, of the forward deployment of American forces. The administration's problem became not just that of extricating the US from combat involvement in the Vietnam War, but that of rebuilding a consensus on a continuing role in Asian security.

The administration's response took a variety of forms - the Vietnamization programme, the start of American troop withdrawal from Southeast Asia, the adoption of the Nixon doctrine, the reformulation of American global military strategy and the increased dependence on the US navy in the Asia-Pacific region. These taken with the opening to China in 1971, not only promised the American public a less demanding and more discriminatory military role in the region but also the possibility of a basic improvement in the general security environment. Allies would be expected to do more for their own defence - which they clearly had the manpower and, with some exceptions the economic wherewithal to do. The United States would do proportionately less and by cultivating her new relationship with China would reduce not only the threat of open conflict but also, it was hoped, Chinese support for Asian insurgencies.

The prospect of a reduced military profile of the US in South East Asia was juxtaposed against a steadily increasing involvement of the Soviet Union in that area. Even though some people were of the view that the Vietnam war had resulted in a permanent Soviet presence in South East Asia, others doubted the level of importance the Kremlin really attached to South East Asia and its relations with Asia in general.² But there can hardly be any ground to doubt that Russia's acquisition of super power status imposed on it to acquire the kind of global presence appropriate to a full fledged global power. This urge impelled Russia to project its political, economic and maritime presence beyond such traditional areas of interest as the Atlantic and Mediterranean. It had to take a continuous interest to counter any excessive American, Japanese and Chinese presence in the Asia-Pacific region.

Shrink in Basing Structure

As the United States was without anything approximating a cohesive grand strategy during this period, the instruments of military power became the first casualty. Military power cannot be understood or defended unless it

2 For a more detailed discussion on the topic see Richard L. Walker, ed., Prospects in the Pacific (Washington, D.C.: Heldref Publications, 1972).

is harnessed to purpose and purpose can only be defined in the context of a comprehensive strategy. This imperative applies to all military forces but especially to seapower. "Yet at a time when the evergrowing importance of the world oceans as the media of the continuing strategic competition between the super powers, as the conveyers and repositories of resources increasingly vital to the functioning of industrial societies and as the arenas of potential new conflict was becoming manifest the United States was thinking of drastically reducing its worldwide network of U.S. military bases and facilities."³ These had sustained the US policy of forward deployment and strategic mobility during the better part of two decades.

The US military expansion in the post-war period was linked to some basic strategic premises. These premises reflected recognition of a new balancing of power on a global scale, a balance that featured the pitting of US assets of global strategic mobility and shrinking power against the Soviet geopolitical advantages in Asia. Bases and facilities were crucial to the US for projecting its military power and influence abroad and for political purposes as well as in the context of the geopolitical confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union.

3 Alvin J. Cottrell and Thomas H. Moorer, US Overseas Bases : Problems of Projecting American Military Power Abroad (The Washington Papers, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1977), vol. 5, no. 47, p. 6.

Until approximately the mid-1960s the "political-military cement" of the US overseas posture held relatively fast. Allies were easy to come by among the frightened and helpless countries ringing the Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of China. They traded infringement of sovereignty (explicit or implicit in the granting of bases and facilities to the US) in return for American military or economic assistance or both. The domestic consensus behind US global policies, although imperfect seemed secure enough. And whatever doubt arose occasionally about specific American intentions tended to be overshadowed by the accepted fact of US superiority on a global scale.

The weakening of the US global posture reflected the erosion of the "political-military" cement. The weakening of the American posture was the cumulative result of the aforementioned changes in the international environment. To the extent that they recovered economic strength and marginal military muscle host countries became more sensitive to bargaining strength and sovereignty factors and raised the ante of negotiations over base rights and access accordingly. They were encouraged in this process by perceptions of a changing balance of power on a global scale and an easing of tensions among the super powers, thus growing skeptical of both the efficacy of American protective commitments and the need for such commitments.

Political trends in the US, budgetary constraints, changes in priorities and the effects of technology

interacted with trends abroad to shrink US military deployments and the basing structure. Commenting on the creation by the US, of a world wide base structure designed to support America's international commitments, Major Robert C.

McFarlane, US Marine Corps, wrote: "The time has come when the capabilities of our allies, the problematic availability of bases, the rising cost - both political and economic - of large forces overseas, and domestic pressures for a shift in government spending priorities render the continuation of such a policy both unsound and unsupportable...."⁴ Senate Democrats headed by Senator Mike Mansfield unanimously approved a resolution on 15 March 1973 calling upon President Nixon to "close excessive and obsolete military bases abroad and substantially reduce the number of servicemen in Asia". Senator Mansfield said: "No single act could do more to stem domestic inflation or the enfeeblement of the dollar abroad".⁵

Though the deterioration of the United States overseas basing structure was worldwide nowhere was it more drastic than in the Western Pacific. The Soviets during the same period increased their facility arrangements abroad to a point where they became roughly equal to the United States in terms of access to foreign facilities and their

4 Major Robert C. McFarlane US Marine Corps, "At Sea : Where We Belong", United States Naval Institute Proceedings (Annapolis, Maryland), vol. 97, November 1971, p. 36.

5 New York Times, 16 March 1973, p. 15, col. 3.

requirements grew as they continued to project themselves on a global scale.⁶

The Nixon Doctrine and its Emphasis on Naval Power

The deterioration in the "base structure" made it necessary to devise more subtle and selective means of projecting military power to substitute for the dwindling nuclear deterrent and for direct military footholds on the Asian mainland. The Nixon Doctrine emphasized naval power in this context.

The Nixon Doctrine recognized many of the changes and shifts taking place on the global scene and made a maximum effort to try and evolve a new and durable strategy.⁷ The doctrine reflected the awareness of the need to redefine the forms and extent of US involvement in the Asia-Pacific region and especially in South East Asia. It suggested the need for a critical reevaluation of what were

6 Alvin J. Cottrell and Thomas H. Moorer, U.S. Overseas Bases: Problems of Projecting American Military Power Abroad (The Washington Papers, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1977), vol. 5, no. 47, p. 9.

7 Although the Doctrine was at first defended as an omni-directional policy without geographical bias, it rapidly came to be associated with Asia. It was first enunciated in the summer of 1969 in Guam during a presidential press conference, and the subsequent changes in the US military posture that were cited as examples of the doctrine at work were drawn almost exclusively from the Asia-Pacific region.

America's vital security interests in the region which involved a redefinition of the US defence posture and the manner in which it would meet its treaty commitments.

Though the Nixon Doctrine clearly expected nations in the area to assume increasing responsibility for their defence it certainly did not imply a withdrawal of the United States from the area.⁸ It expressly stated that the US would keep all of its treaty commitments, continue to provide a nuclear shield and furnish military and economic assistance when appropriate.⁹

The Nixon Doctrine clearly postulated the United States as a Pacific power, though not necessarily as a land power on the Pacific. It was understood that "for obvious geopolitical reasons, the offensive capability of the U.S. must be built around balanced forces of a predominantly naval orientation"¹⁰ and "for the continued commitment to allies

8 For a comment on Asian leaders concern that a power vacuum would exist if the US withdrew from the Asia-Pacific area see, New York Times, 12 January 1970, section 4, p. 4, col. 1.

9 For details on the Nixon Doctrine and how it related specifically to East Asia and the Pacific see, U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's : Building for Peace - A Report to the Congress by Richard Nixon President of the United States, February 25, 1971 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1971), pp. 10-21 and 91-110.

10 Major Robert C. McFarlane, US Marine Corps, "At Sea : Where We Belong", United States Naval Institute Proceedings (Annapolis, Maryland), vol. 97, November 1971, p. 36.

and the control of essential sea lines of communication for the support of major and minor contingencies....the key element consists of ready naval forces capable of forward deployment when and where required."¹¹

In a comment on the Nixon Doctrine, United States Secretary of Defence Melvin Laird said, "the United States would maintain a naval and air presence in South East Asia after American ground troops were withdrawn and that such presence was required if the U.S. was to maintain a policy of realistic deterrence in Asia during the seventies".¹² It was clear that "the United States would maintain an active and continuous presence and active participation in the area, but one adjusted to a new power equation in the world as well as the region based on nuclear parity and structured in a multipolar setting".¹³

Despite such adjustments regarding the forms and extent of America's involvement, the premises and content of America's basic interests remained unchanged. These revolved around the need to prevent its principal adversary the Soviet Union, from establishing a position of preeminence in the region including rimlands and the important islands

11 Ibid., p. 36.

12 New York Times, 14 April 1971, p. 4, col. 4.

13 Richard L. Walker, ed., Prospects in the Pacific (Washington, D.C.: Heldref Publications, 1972), p. 26.

of the Asia-Pacific area; to promote stability and relative prosperity in the region; to ensure open seas and continued access to raw materials and markets and to maintain a continuing partnership with Japan, detente with the USSR and normalization of relations with China.

The Nixon visit to China in 1972 and the subsequent restoration of diplomatic relations with it portended profound changes for the power balance in the Pacific. With the restoration of relations with China and the beginning of American military disengagement from the mainland (South East Asia and Korea) America's political, economic and strategic relations in Asia came to be basically offshore. This was reflected in the increased attention the US gave to Japan, Philippines and Indonesia.

Naval Facilities in the Western Pacific

The task of providing naval support in the Western Pacific was performed by the US Seventh Fleet. It comprised approximately 100 ships (representing 46% of the total US active fleet) which were dependent for support on an extensive network of forward naval bases and facilities in the area.¹⁴ The most important of these are described in

¹⁴ For a complete survey of US Bases in the Western Pacific see Alvin J. Cottrell and Thomas H. Moorer, "U.S. Overseas Bases : The Problems of Projecting American Military Power Abroad", The Washington Papers, vol. 5, no. 47 (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1977), pp. 45-54. Larry A. Niksch, "Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific", in U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Foreign Policy Objectives and Overseas Military Installations (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1979), pp. 144-5, and Larry A. Niksch, "Northeast Asia", *ibid.*, pp. 176-7.

Table I.¹⁵ The alliance naval presence in the Pacific was enlarged by the not insignificant navies of Japan, Taiwan, and Australia. They were dispersed across the vast span of Western and South-western Pacific and served primarily national interests during peacetime.

From the military standpoint, the Western offshore US position was a strong one with the Philippine bases and forces providing a southern anchor for their offshore counterparts further north in Japan and Okinawa. It was a system that permitted the efficient deployment of a military presence throughout the western Pacific as a general deterrent to conflict, as a reassurance to allies and friendly governments and as a forward defence of American Pacific territories.

The US had two naval installations in the Philippines. The naval complex at Subic Bay provided the chief support and maintenance function for the seventh fleet as well as telecommunications and cryptologic functions. This was aided by a small naval communications station at San Miguel. Both naval installations are located on the Luzon which is one of the main islands. These facilities received valuable air and logistic support from the nearby Clark airforce base, the largest American air installation outside the US.

15 The US Third Fleet is primarily an administrative command for ships in service, training or repair along the West coast of the US. The bulk of US Pacific assets are assigned to the Third Fleet during peacetime.

Table I

U.S. Naval Facilities in the Western Pacific*

Country	Total U.S. Navy Personnel Ashore/Afloat	Installation	Location	Mission
The Philippines	<u>11,595</u> 4,501/7,094	Naval complex	Subic Bay (Luzon)	Fleet support, air operations, telecommunications and cryptologic function
		Naval communications station	San Miguel	Telecommunications
Japan	<u>17,445</u> 7,588/9,857	Marine Corps complex	Okinawa	Fleet marine force training, support and air operations
		Naval Complex	Okinawa	Fleet support, air operations and cryptologic functions
		Marine Corps air station	Iwakuni	Marine air operations
		Naval complex	Sasebo	Store-ship homeport
		Naval complex	Yokosuka	Fleet-support, base and air operations
Guam	<u>11,595</u> 4,501/7,094	Naval complex	Guam/Agana/	Fleet support, air operations telecommunications and cryptologic functions
		(Magazine, naval station, supply depot, hospital ship repair facility communication station)	Finegyan	

93

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Table I (contd)

Country	Total U.S. Navy Per- sonnel Ashore/Afloat	Installation	Location	Mission
Taiwan	$\frac{719}{396/323}$	Support activity	Taipei	Supports U.S. units in Taiwan
Australia	$\frac{409}{409/}$	Naval communica- tion station	Exmouth	Telecommunications
		H.E. Holt		

* Source: Table 309A-DOD Military Personnel Strengths By Regional Area and By Country-Military Function Summary, Department of Defence OASD (Comptroller), Directorate for Information Operation and Control, November 19, 1976, also chart appended to OCNO memo 402/D/25, February 13, 1976

Quoted in Alvin J. Cottrell and Thomas H. Moorer, "U.S. Overseas Bases: Problems of Projecting American Military Power Abroad", The Washington Papers, vol. 5, no. 47 (Beverly Hills, London; Sage Publications, 1973), p. 46.

The Subic Bay complex with approximately 4,500 navy and marine personnel (1976 figures) was the largest American naval base west of Hawaii and the "key" to effective naval operations in the Western Pacific, particularly for projection of power into the South China sea.

United States relations with Japan involving major military and economic interests have been described as the core of US involvement in the Pacific.¹⁶ In 1976 the US maintained over 40 naval facilities in Japan. The headquarters of the seventh fleet were located at the Yokosuka - Yukohama complex. The Yokosuka complex was the most significant US base in Japan and the northwest Pacific. Thus it could be compared to Subic Bay in the south. Yokosuka's value to the US increased dramatically with the rundown of US naval operations in Sasebo, which was by 1976 ostensibly only a homeboat for a combat store ship. Naval operations in Japan were facilitated by the Misawa airforce station which because of its geographic location on the great transatlantic Pacific circle route enabled the navy to conduct anti-submarine warfare and electronic intelligence coverage of

16 US Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson and Dr Edwin Reischauer, both former ambassadors to Japan, considered US relations with Japan to be, in President Johnson's words, "the single most important element in the preservation of American security west of Hawaii". Statement by Mr Johnson to the Symington Subcommittee on 26 January 1970. Dr Reischauer is quoted to the same effect in New York Times, 23 November 1969, p. E4. Quoted in Paul A. Roland, American Military Commitments Abroad (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1973), p.47.

Soviet operations in the Sea of Japan and Okhotsk, and the Kurile Island chain.

All of these bases in Japan and the Philippines have the twin advantages of physical proximity to areas of strategic importance and favourable year-round weather conditions. The navy communication center at Exmouth, Australia and the US manned Australian facility at North Cape service US naval units in the Indian Ocean. Finally, there is a naval complex on Guam which includes the Polaris submarine base at Apra Harbour and a small ship repair facility, supply depot and communications centre.

The bases in Japan and the Philippines were of vital importance to the US and it was in these areas that the United States ran into difficulties. As has been stated previously, because these bases were located outside of American territory, their continued existence and viability was dependent upon the political relationship between the US and the government in power. The tenuous basis upon which the US military presence rested was graphically demonstrated in the case of the Philippines and Japan.

In the Philippines, according to an agreement in the mid-sixties free US basing rights were to end in 1991. In 1968 only 17 US basing areas were operative, decreasing to six by 1975. An important naval closure came in 1971 with the shutdown of the naval station at Sangley Point.

The US bases had become something of an embarrassment to the Marcos government which was intent on moving the Philippines towards a more independent and neutralist world role. This resulted in a series of negotiations on the basing agreement under the Ford administration. Commenting on the importance of the Philippine facilities, the Commander in Chief Pacific Command Admiral Maurice F. Weisner stated:

....U.S. naval and air operations in the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean bases are heavily dependent upon support provided from Philippine bases. Philippine bases are key to our ability to efficiently support forward deployed air and naval forces. The replacement of these facilities would cost several billion dollars. Aside from fiscal considerations, the geographical location of the Philippines is strategically advantageous... Any other location would downgrade our capabilities in the South China Sea and Indian Ocean. 17

Though Japan was dependent on America's military strength to safeguard its security interests, US bases came under sharp attack from leftist and pacifist groups in the country. Tensions reached a height in the late 1960s when the emotional issue of the reversion of Okinawa gave the pacifists a rallying point. Japanese attitudes towards US bases were intertwined with US policies in other areas of the Pacific especially Korea and Taiwan and the value of American security commitments to Japan. In the Joint

17 Peter L. Young, "America in the Western Pacific : The Politics of Forward U.S. Military Bases", Asian Defence (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), November-December 1978, p. 10.

Communique of 21 November 1969 announcing the reversion to Japan of administrative rights over Okinawa, the Japanese government acknowledged for the first time that "the security of Japan could not be adequately maintained without international peace and security in the Far East and, therefore, the security of countries in the Far East was a matter of serious concern to Japan".¹⁸ In 1972, in response to an outcry by Japanese opposition politicians who charged that the movement of US military forces from bases in Japan to the war in Vietnam was a violation of the US-Japan mutual security pact, Japanese premier Sato said: "The United States should limit its base facilities in Japan to positions required to help protect the nation under the security treaty rather than to support American military commitments in Asia."¹⁹

It was realized that Japan could never be considered as an alternative location for increasing American naval presence in the Pacific Basin should the US withdraw from the Philippines. Taiwan was not a viable alternative given the US intent to improve relations with the Peoples Republic of China. In Australia, Prime Minister Malcolm

¹⁸ Paul A. Roland, American Military Commitments Abroad (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1973), p. 39.

¹⁹ New York Times, 10 March 1972, p. 5, col. 2.

Fraser indicated his country's willingness to permit access to Australian bases to US naval forces. But it was evident that the facilities could not duplicate geographically or in other ways those in the Philippines without unacceptable financial losses. Guam, a US territory and Marianas Islands forming a part of the US administered trust territory of the Pacific Islands, represented more politically secure areas for US naval operations in the Pacific Islands.

However, as in the case of Japan they were both located in a disadvantageous position for quick support and projection of naval power into the South China sea and the Indian Ocean. "Although these vital military facilities could theoretically be relocated further east in the Marianas, the long lead time, the great expense, the interim vacuum would greatly undermine the entire fabric of the U.S. forward deployment strategy."²⁰

Increasingly, the Navy came to be the instrument to carry out US security policies and safeguard their interests in the area. The navy began to evolve towards the primary US contribution to Asian defence. It was clearly understood that the navy had unique capabilities to provide a regional nuclear and conventional presence in peacetime, a substantial capacity to project military force

20 William R. Feeney, "Geopolitical and Soviet-American Maritime Rivalry in the Western Pacific", Korea and World Affairs (Seoul, Korea), vol. 4, Winter 1980, p. 542.

quickly in case of aggression, and an obvious relevance to the ill-defined, but nonetheless widespread allied concerns about protection of Pacific Sea Lines of Communication. Although not independent of land bases, the navy could operate for extended periods without access to local facilities, if these should be denied in a crisis and could by increasing its inventory of tankers and other support ships, reduce its vulnerability to this unpredictable eventuality. Thus, the emphasis in the Pacific area came to be placed primarily though not entirely on naval facilities; and the US strategic doctrine was on its way to becoming clearly one of primary reliance on maritime strategy.

Trends in the US Navy

In the face of greater reliance being placed on the US navy, it became important to examine some significant trends within it. With the decline in force levels, the capability of the US Navy to perform its primary functions of sea control and power projection came to be questioned.

In 1967, the US navy had a fleet numbering 967 ships; by 1976 it had just under 500 units. In the short period of eight years the US navy's numerical strength was roughly halved. The 1975-1976 edition of Jane's Fighting Ships indicates a continuation of the trend of the past few years: of the increasing capabilities and, to some extent, size of the Soviet Navy and the decreasing size and to some extent, capabilities of the US Navy.

The rapid decline in the quantity and, to some extent quality of the US fleet was a planned move directed largely by Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr. Chief of Naval Operations from 1970-1974. The purpose was to save operating and maintenance costs from older ships for use in building newer more capable warships. As a result of this policy, in Admiral Zumwalt's words, in 1974 the US Navy "was at our point of greatest weakness, and, in my estimate, our greatest jeopardy", and elaborating on one area of potential US-Soviet naval conflict, Admiral Zumwalt stated:

In 1970, when I first became CNO, it was my judgement that we had just slightly better than an even chance - 55 per cent probability of winning a sea-control war at that time with the Soviets. I made that judgement based on my personal knowledge of several analyses and recent experience of the fleet. In the years since 1970, our chances for success have diminished. 21

Admiral Zumwalt's contention was disputed by numerous others. In a Senate speech Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John C. Stennis stated that the US navy was without doubt superior to the Soviet navy. He said the alarmist charges expounded by Admiral Zumwalt and others were both false and dangerous as they could undermine US strength in the eyes of allies and adversaries. He noted that the US navy had over twice the tonnage in major surface ships

21 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 6.

with greater range and more weapons and the Soviet navy lacked aircraft carriers and major amphibious forces.²² Contrary to the position held by Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, his successor Admiral James L. Holloway expressed confidence in the ability of the US navy to maintain control of the seas.²³

By the mid-seventies the goal became to rebuild the US fleet in a balanced manner to the required level of capability. The navy's leadership estimated that 600 active ships were required to provide an adequate submarine force: maintain ships forward deployed in the eastern Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Western Pacific, and periodically in the Indian Ocean, reinforce those forces in times of crisis or alert; and carry out other tasks required by national strategy.

However, inflation, the increased cost of new weapons systems and platforms required to increase the portion of the federal budget devoted to non-defence spending all tended to place the realization of that goal in jeopardy. Inflation hit the defence industries particularly hard. In addition to inflation the increasing complexity and capability requirements of modern weapons systems was driving costs rapidly upward. According to Senator John

22 New York Times, 20 September 1974, p. 19, col. 1.

23 Ibid., 31 October 1971, p. 14, col. 1.

Stennis, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee:

The purchase costs of modern weapons has increased by many times even within the last few years....If the geometric cost increase for weapons systems is not sharply reversed, then even significant increases in the defense budget may not assure the force levels required for our national security. 24

The US 1976 defence budget was 15 per cent below the pre-Vietnam level in terms of real money. In addition personnel costs were increasing in the all volunteer environment accounting for more than one half of the defence budget. Ships were particularly vulnerable to inflation and other funding problems because of their long construction periods. At this time the Soviet Union was estimated to be devoting 60 per cent more resources to strategic nuclear offensive forces and 20 per cent more to general purpose forces than was the United States. For a comparison of US and Soviet naval strength see Table II.

24 Stated in the Report of the Commission on the Organization of the Government for the Conduct of Foreign Policy, Defense and Armed Control Study, vol. II, p. 5; quoted in Vice Admiral Joseph P. Moorer, U.S. Navy, "U.S. Naval Strategy of the Future", Strategic Review (Washington, D.C.), vol. 4, Spring 1976, p. 75.

Table IIA Simplistic Comparison

(Mid-1975 naval strengths)

<u>Submarines</u>	United States	Soviet Union
Ballistic missile (nuclear)	41 +	55 +
Ballistic missile (diesel)	-	22
Cruise missile (nuclear)	-	40 +
Cruise missile (diesel)	-	25
Torpedo-attack (nuclear)	64 +	35 +
Torpedo-attack (diesel)	10	150 +
<u>Aircraft Carriers</u>	14 +	(+)
<u>Helicopter Carriers</u>	7 +	2
<u>Cruisers</u>		
Guided-missile SAM/SSM	-	18 +
Guided-missile SAM	27 +	1
All-gun armament	-	12
<u>Destroyers</u>		
Guided missile SAM/SSM	-	15 +
Guided missile SAM	39	30 +
Guided missile SSM	-	4
All-gun armament	66 +	40
<u>Frigates (former US ocean escorts)</u>	65 +	109 +

Table II (contd.)

	United States	Soviet Union
Amphibious Ships		-
Over 10,000 tons full load	37	-
Under 10,000 tons full load (over 200 ft overall)	20	110 +
<u>Missile Craft</u>	5 +	135 +
Patrol/ASW/Torpedo Craft	26	375 +
Minesweepers	25	280 +

Notes:

1. + indicates that additional units are currently under construction or conversion.
2. US data include 30 destroyers, three large amphibious ships and 40 minesweepers and patrol craft manned largely by reservists and not officially counted in active strength totals. The US Navy additionally has one training carrier and two non-combatant research submarines in service.
3. Soviet SAM/SSM destroyer strength is based on 10 Krivak-class ships and an estimated live Kashin-class refitted with SSM launchers.

Source: Norman Polmar, "A Matter of Comparison", Navy International (Surrey, UK), vol. 80, October 1975, p. 10.

Speaking in the specific context of the US military presence in the Pacific, compared with the time of the Vietnam War, former Vice Chief of US Naval Operations Admiral Bagley noted:

The Pacific Fleet is half its numerical size in 1964 and forty per cent of its peak force level in the Vietnam War. Carrier task groups in the Seventh Fleet were cut from three to two in 1975 and all forward deployed naval forces, normally about one third of the Pacific fleet strength are proportionately less. 25

This reduction notwithstanding, the US military presence in the Pacific and littoral Asia was still substantial. At the end of 1976 nearly half the US navy's order of battle and at least one-third of the Marine Corps divisional structure was in the Pacific. In the case of the Soviet navy although quantitatively stable over the past few years, the quality of combatants was improved by the replacement of older vessels by modern anti-submarine warfare types and nuclear powered submarines.

It is important to note that alongside the Soviet qualitative and quantitative expansion in the Pacific, the US Pacific Command's (PACOM's) area of responsibility was progressively expanded. With the end of US occupation of Japan and the cessation of hostilities in the area, in 1957,

25 Quoted in Peter L. Young, "America in the Western Pacific : The Politics of Forward U.S. Military Bases", Asian Defence Journal (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), November-December 1978, p. 10.

PACOM absorbed the US Far Eastern Command. In 1972, due to the reorganization of the US armed forces into the worldwide unified command system, PACOM became responsible for the Indian Ocean, South Asia and the Arctic. In 1976 PACOM's responsibilities were extended to West Africa. Thus, rather than being concentrated in South East Asia in the post-Vietnam war period PACOM's new responsibilities were many thousands of miles apart. The Nixon administration's programme of ground force reduction in the area put greater pressure on PACOM's naval and air units as the viable signs of America's commitment to Northeast Asia.

Soviet Naval Buildup and Challenge

The growth of Soviet maritime power in the Pacific region represented a direct and growing challenge to the economic, political and strategic interests of the US and its allies. Soviet maritime activities began to affect the sea going activities of the US and were perceived as a potential threat to the ability of the US and its allies to carry out their missions in the event of war. But it would be a mistake to view the Soviet prowess at sea as a challenge to maritime activities alone. The loss of seaborne imports was a real possibility. Concern about access to foreign supplies often led to talk about "essential seaborne imports", "critical raw materials", and "vital sea lanes" but these statements were heavily weighted with political, economic and

security judgements hinged to enormous political, economic and security considerations ashore. Soviet maritime operations came to be more properly viewed as part of a patient effort to expand Soviet power and whittle down Western strength and influence.

The Soviet navy at the end of World War II was in little better shape than it had been after World War I, and the destruction of Soviet industrial capability left no resources available for building a navy. As soon as it was possible, however, Stalin began a large ship-building programme. On Stalin's death in 1953 the anti naval forces once again gained control of the Kremlin, and Stalin's warship construction programmes were largely cancelled in favour of merchant ship construction. The new Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, backed the policy of assembling a force built-around the submarine and the cruise missile. This force was justified on the basis of a defensive strategy, aimed initially at American carriers and later expanded to include American ballistic missile submarines.

Sergei Gorskhov rose to the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet navy in the 1950s and was able to preserve and sustain much of the oceangoing capability of the then somewhat limited Soviet navy, almost in spite

of Khrushchev's defence-oriented strategy.²⁶

After the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, the Soviets initiated massive ship-building programmes which resulted in ships of all sizes and varying capabilities, which were disgorged in large quantities from the Baltic to Vladivostok.

From the decade of the 1950s the Soviet Union had been preoccupied with overcoming US nuclear superiority in strategic nuclear systems. United States nuclear superiority had inspired Admiral Gorshkov, Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet navy to ask: "Could the Soviet Union in the face of imperialist threat agree to the eternal domination of seas and oceans by the western powers, particularly when broad regions of the ocean became launch points of missiles with nuclear warheads?"²⁷ The question gained tremendous import

26 There is extensive literature on the evolution of the Soviet Navy and naval strategy. See Robert W. Herrick, Soviet Naval Strategy (Annapolis, Maryland; the Naval Institute Press, 1968); Norman Polmar, Soviet Naval Power Challenge for the 1970's (New York: Crane Russak, 1974), rev. ed.; Micheal MccGwire, "The Evolution of Soviet Naval Policy : 1960-74", in Micheal MccGwire, Ken Booth and James McDonnell, ed, Soviet Naval Policy : Objectives and Constraints (New York: Praeger, 1975); John E. Moore, The Soviet Navy Today (London: Macdonald and Janes, 1975); and Lt. Cdr. J.T. Westwood, US Navy, "Soviet Naval Strategy, 1968-1978", U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings (Annapolis, Maryland), vol. 104, May 1978, pp. 114-27.

27 Quoted in Paul H. Nitze and Others, Securing the Seas : The Soviet Naval Challenge and Western Alliance Options (Boulder, Colorado; Westview Press, 1979), p. 384.

after the Cuban Missile Crisis and major work was begun in the country for the creation of a powerful high sea 'rocket nuclear fleet'.

The fundamental direction by which the qualitative reform of the fleet was guided were: "change to the construction of an atomic submarine fleet; the introduction of rockets and nuclear weapons and the establishment of a submarine rocket nuclear system of strategic significance; arming the fleet of ships with aviation capabilities and the introduction of varied applications of radioelectronics, automation of control weapons and military technology and also mathematical methods of research using computers".²⁸ In 1967 the Soviets put out the first of the Charlie class, nuclear propelled cruise missile submarines. These came to be considered the principal conventional strike force of the Soviet navy. Commenting on the Soviet naval programme, Vice Admiral H.G. Rickover, US Navy, said that the "U.S. lead in nuclear powered submarines was rapidly diminishing as a result of large scale Soviet construction programmes".²⁹

Thus in a relatively short span of about fifteen years the Soviets had redressed the strategic balance while

28 Sergei G. Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State* (Moscow: Military Publishing House, 1976), p. 290.

29 New York Times, 13 November 1971, p. 37, col. 4.

maintaining a conventional force balance and had begun to exert political and military power well beyond their own shores.

Three of Gorshkov's statements are particularly relevant in this context. Speaking of these developments Admiral Gorshkov had written:

The Soviet navy has been converted in the full sense of the word into an offensive type of long range armed force...which could exert a decisive influence on the course of armed struggle in theatres of military operation to a vast extent and which is able to support state interests at sea in particular;...the disruption of ocean lines of communication has continued to be one of our fleets missions; and...the Soviet navy is a powerful factor for the buildup of socialism and communism. 30

For the first time the Soviet Union was confident that it could inflict as much or more damage than it could sustain in any major super power confrontation; and it was most certainly a match for opposing forces on the Eurasian subcontinent. It was apparent that "the Soviet Navy had moved away from the defence oriented, anti-carrier, anti-submarine role and had begun adopting some of the missions traditionally associated with sea power - the interdiction of enemy sea lines of communication and the support of Soviet foreign policy."³¹

30 Quoted in Patrick Wall, ed, The Southern Oceans and the Security of the Free World (London: Stacey International, 1977), p. 63.

31 J. William Middendorf II, "American Maritime Strategy and Soviet Naval Expansion", Strategic Review (Washington, D.C.), vol. 4, Winter 1976, p. 20.

The present political alignments as well as the economic strength and military balance of the West was dependent on the availability of the seas for exchange of resources and finished products and in time of war the movement of military supplies and the projection of military force. Thus, the spectre of an effective, globally deployed deep water Soviet navy added considerable uncertainty to the future correlation of political, economic and military forces, from which the West had in the past gained so greatly.

In the Pacific region, although hostilities between the US and Soviet navies were almost inconceivable except as a part of a general war, which itself was unlikely, perception of US-Soviet capabilities were important for their other ramifications.

For example, it was argued that if China concluded that the US navy was no longer supreme in the western Pacific, it would be less likely to view the US as a useful counterweight to Soviet power and would therefore be less likely to avoid a showdown with the US over Taiwan.

Soviet naval presence in the western Pacific having steadily increased, posed a potential threat to Japan's vital sea lanes. Japan is uniquely dependent on its overseas supply line to sustain its national life. Submarine forces in the Western Pacific might make it difficult for the Japanese to continue to see the advantages of their ties

to the Western alliance if they felt that the shipping lines they depended upon for their essential supplies could be cut by the Soviet navy.

It was feared that Soviet naval strength could achieve such a preponderance of force on and around the continents that the western oriented nations may undergo "finlandization of their own accord".

The expanded Soviet naval activity in the Pacific was highlighted in the Okean and Vesna (usually called Okean II or Okean '75 in the west), in which ships from the Far East fleet participated in manoeuvres involving elements of the entire Soviet navy. The Okean exercises took place in the context of broad expansion of operations by the Far East fleet. US Secretary of the Navy J. William Middendorf II, in a speech to the Navy League said, the Russians had used the exercise to evaluate command and control of naval forces worldwide, including ocean surveillance, anti carrier, anti submarine, anti convoy operations and electronic systems.³² "Okean II made it quite clear to the non-Communist world that full global strategic mobility, long considered a prerogative of the United States in the post-1945 world, was now available to the Soviet Union".³³

32 New York Times, 28 April 1975, p. 6, col. 4.

33 David Rees, "The Gorshkov Strategy in the Far East", Pacific Community (Tokyo, Japan), vol. 9, January 1978, p. 143.

Soviet Pacific Fleet Force Levels and a
Qualitative Analysis of US-Soviet Force Levels

Soviet naval power in the Asia Pacific region resides with the Pacific Fleet. Due to the long distances involved it is somewhat isolated from its three sister fleets in the western USSR. Its area of geographic responsibility is vast covering not only the Sea of Japan, the Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific Ocean but also the Indian Ocean.

The major Soviet naval port, Logistics and training centre and headquarters of the Pacific Fleet are located at Vladivostok. Additional naval facilities are located at Nakhodka on the Gulf of America. The two ports are frozen for over three months during the winter but are kept open by icebreakers. Some 570 miles to the north is Sovetskaya Gavan (opposite Sakhalin). The base is also icebound from December to March and is frequently fogbound. Magadan (on the northern coast of Kamchatka Peninsula) suffers from the same drawback. The major submarine base for the Soviet Pacific Fleet is located at Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy. This is the only major Soviet base with direct access to any open ocean and lies only 500 miles north of the major trans Pacific shipping routes. However during the summer months the coasts are fogbound more than half of the time, and in winter the ports are iced over six months of

the year.³⁴ Another disadvantage is that because the base has no overland communication links with the rest of the country and can only be resupplied by sea or air, it is highly vulnerable to blockade. "A serious problem for the Soviet Pacific fleet is the necessity to egress from all but two of their Far East naval bases through three narrow strategic chokepoints."³⁵ Thus, Soviet maritime movements have been seriously constrained by a combination of unfavourable geopolitical factors.

Although the Soviet Pacific fleet was not the first to receive modern ships and aircraft it had benefitted from the modernization and expanding operations of the entire Soviet navy. Following the pattern for the rest of the navy, most new equipment in the Far East fleet can operate over longer ranges and for longer periods away from base than older ships. "The fleets overall capabilities have risen markedly in the past decade not only because of quantitative increases in vital areas such as major surface combatants or ballistic missile submarines but also because of the generally increased quality of the new platforms entering service therein"³⁶

34 Seigfred Breyer and Norman Polmar, Guide to the Soviet Navy (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1977), 2nd ed., p. 529.

35 William R. Feeney, "Geopolitics and Soviet-American Maritime Rivalry in the Western Pacific", Korea and World Affairs (Seoul), vol. 4, Winter 1980, p. 540.

36 Donald C. Daniel, "The Soviet Navy in the Pacific", Asia Pacific Community (Tokyo, Japan), Spring-Early Summer 1979, p. 67.

The distribution of the major combat units of the Soviet Pacific Fleet and the US Seventh Fleet is provided in Table III. Ostensibly, the statistics appear to confer

Table III

Comparative US-USSR Naval Orders of Battle
in the Pacific (1978)

Type of Ship/Aircraft	Soviet Pacific Fleet	U.S. Fleet 7th (+3rd)
1	2	3
1. Major Surface Combatants		
a. Aircraft Carriers	1*	2(6)**
b. Cruisers	9	4(15)
c. Frigates	22	8(30)
d. Destroyers	27	10(36)
Sub-total	59	24(87)
2. Submarines		
a. Ballistic Missile	28	10(0)
b. Attack/Cruise Missile	68	5(31)
Sub-total	96	15(31)
3. Mine Warfare Craft	70	0(3)
4. Amphibious Craft	73	8(22)
5. Naval Aviation		
a. Carrier Based	12	180(540)
b. Land Based	175	40(150)
Sub-total	187	220(690)
6. Total Major ships	155	39(118)

Source: Paul H. Nitze, Leonard Sullivan, Jr., and the Atlantic Council Working Group on Securing the Seas, Securing the Seas: The Soviet Naval Challenge and Western Alliance Options (Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1979), pp. 97, 102, 115 and 219.

* The V/STOL carrier Minsk, joined the Soviet Pacific Fleet in June 1979. This ship carries 12 V/STOL aircraft and 20 helicopters.

** The figure in parenthesis represents the total number of ships in the Seventh and Third fleets combined.

a significant relative power advantage on the Soviet fleet. However, in the event of a crisis or a general war many ships attached to the US Third Fleet, which operates east of Hawaii, would be deployed to Western Pacific waters, despite the lengthy sailing time necessary. Also, in a crisis the USSR would have to confront not only a considerably augmented US naval regional presence, but also possibly, some or most of the names of formal US regional allies. Thus under optimal circumstances the Soviets would be at a disadvantage. However the advantageous US position could erode significantly if the support some or most of its actual or potential regional allies was forthcoming. See Table IV, Table V.

Table IV

Pacific Naval Order of Battle : U.S. and Actual/Potential Allies (1978)

Region and Country	Submarines			Aviation Capable Ships		Surface Combatants				Small Combatant Ships		
	Missile SSBN	Attack SSN	SS (Totals)	CV	CH	Cruisers	Frigates	Destroyers	(Totals)	Misl/Trp.	Gun	Mine
<u>1 Eastern Pacific</u>												
U.S. 3rd Fleet	-	26	5 (31)	4	2	11	22	26	(59)	-	-	3
Canada	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	2	(11)	-	-	-
<u>2. Western Pacific</u>												
U.S. 7th Fleet	10	5	- (15)	2	2	4	8	10	(22)	-	-	-
Japan	-	-	17 (17)	-	-	-	15	30	(45)	20	10	37
South Korea	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	7	(16)	14	1	12
Taiwan*	-	-	2 (2)	-	-	-	10	18	(28)	9	-	22
Philippines	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	(10)	-	14	4
Malaysia*	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	(1)	8	6	6
PRC*	1+	1	75 (77)	-	-	-	14	9	(23)	362	404	17
<u>3 Oceania</u>												
Australia	-	-	6 (6)	-	1	-	6	4	(10)	12	-	3
New Zealand	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	(4)	2	-	-
U.S. Alone	10	31	5 (46)	6	4	15	30	36	(81)	0	0	3
U.S.+ Actual/ Potential Allies	11	32	99 (123)	6	5	15	108	106	(229)	427	435	105

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* These states are potential rather than formal allies of the U.S. in a war with the Soviet Union.

+ This submarine has not been fitted with operational missiles.

Source: Paul H. Nitze, Leonard Sullivan, Jr., and the Atlantic Council Working Group, Securing the Seas (Colorado, 1979) p. 219; and Captain John Moore, ed., Jane's Fighting Ships, 1978-79 (New York: Franklin Watts, 1978), pp. 34, 95, 275 and 310.

Table V

Pacific Naval Order of Battle : USSR and Allies (1978)

Region	Submarines				SS (To- tals)	Aviation Capable Ships					Small Combatant Ships		
	Missile		Attack			Surface Combatants					Misl/ Trp.	Gun	Mine
	SSBN/ SSB	SSGN/ SSG	SSN	(To- tals)									
					CH	Cruisers	Fri- gates	Des- troyers	(To- tals)				
<u>Western Pacific</u>													
Soviet Pacific Fleet	48	48	50	29	(154)	1*	9	22	27	(58)	65	85	70
North Korea	-	-	-	15	(15)	-	-	3	-	(3)	183	134	0
Vietnam	-	-	-	-	(0)	-	-	2	-	(2)	14	22	0
USSR Alone	48	48	50	29	(154)	1	9	22	27	(58)	65	85	70
USSR + Allies	48	48	50	44	(169)	1	9	27	27	(63)	262	241	70

* This aircraft carrier was deployed in June 1979.

Source: Paul H. Nitze, Leonard Sullivan, Jr., and the Atlantic Council Working Group. Securing the Seas (Colorado, 1979), pp. 97, 102, 104; and Captain John Moore, ed., op. cit., pp. 304, 484, 746-7.

Considerable concern was also expressed regarding the strategic deterioration of US naval power in the Pacific. One analysis pointed out that US security policy in the Pacific rested upon two assumptions: first, the assurance that the Soviet Union would not secure a naval or naval air base in Southeast Asia or elsewhere between the Sea of Japan and the Arabian Sea; and second that China would persist in its anti-Soviet policies.³⁷ The two areas where the Soviet Union could possibly acquire facilities were thought to be Taiwan and Vietnam and their acquisition would represent a great change in the prior defensively based Soviet naval posture in the Pacific. It was realized that Soviet acquisition of naval facilities and airbases on Taiwan would be a geostrategic masterstroke at once providing momentous advantages vis-a-vis the PRC, Japan and the US; and would challenge the entire US forward maritime deployment policy in the region. Fears were also expressed in various quarters in the US regarding acquisition by the USSR of base rights in Vietnam, which would permit a Soviet forward deployment posture astride one of the major Far Eastern maritime shipping routes and would effectively neutralize the US presence at Subic Bay and the Clark Airforce Base across the South China Sea.

37 Admiral Elmo Zumwalt and Admiral North H. Bagley, "Strategic Deterioration in the Pacific: The Dilemma for the U.S. and Japan", Pacific Community (Tokyo, Japan), vol. 9, January 1979, pp. 124-5.

Naval Objectives and Missions

In conformity with the strategic context, Soviet naval objectives during the period under discussion and its aftermath can be described as: (1) The capability to counter US sea based strategic systems as they have evolved - initially with anti carrier systems and later in the form of anti submarine systems; (2) The creation and improvement of a naval strategic capability primarily with ballistic missile submarines; (3) A submarine, land based naval aircraft and surface navy capable of inflicting surface vessels and merchant ships with conventional or nuclear vessels and merchant ships with conventional or nuclear weapons, and of extensively mining port facilities, (4) The maintenance of strong naval coastal defence and countermining capabilities as well as an expanding capacity to project naval infantry within areas of friendly land based air cover; (5) Development of forward resupply capabilities consistent with sustained operations in distant waters - without extensive dependence on permanent shore bases abroad; and (6) Full civil maritime support of naval research, naval operations and intelligence gathering.

The imperative of US naval evolution has been, in general, since World War II to develop a major sea based nuclear war deterrent while maintaining the ability to control the seas and exploit that control in support of US politico-

military interests. This has led to four major naval objectives: Maintenance of land and sea based anti-submarine warfare forces capable of defeating conventional or nuclear operations of an increasingly sophisticated Soviet attack submarine fleet; (2) creation of a relatively invulnerable sea-based strategic deterrent; (3) Maintenance of a substantial capacity to project air power at sea or ashore in the face of increasing Soviet or Soviet supplied defences, and (4) Maintenance of the capability to project amphibious forces ashore against substantial opposition.

The primary missions of the two opposing navies has been significantly different since the second world war. Apart from strategic deterrence, the United States continued its emphasis on sea control and power projection; the Soviet Union concentrated on sea denial.³⁸

Western Alliance naval strategy was seen to encompass five distinct missions in the Pacific. These were: "Strategic Deterrence; Neutralization of Soviet Submarine Launch Ballistic Missile Forces; Offensive Operations in Support of Allied Security Interests; Atlantic Reinforcement of a NATO First Scenerio; Defence of Pacific and Indian Ocean Sea Lanes of Communication."³⁹

38 See Vice Admiral Stansfield Turner, US Navy, "Missions of the U.S. Navy", United States Naval Institute Proceedings (Annapolis, Maryland), vol. 100, December 1974, pp. 19-25.

39 Paul H. Nitze and others, Securing the Seas : The Soviet Naval Challenge and Western Alliance Options (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1979), p. 205.

While the official view was that the US Navy was able to marginally discharge its sea control responsibilities at least in areas of vital interest; there was strong dissension from some Congressional elements and from several naval authorities. The latter believed that while the US had sufficiently capable forces for power projection it lacked survivable forces for sea control in some areas of vital interest. For example, an important cause of concern according to them, was the dwindling capabilities to defend the Western Pacific Sea Lanes of Communication to Japan.

In his introduction to Admiral Gorshkov's book, ⁴⁰ Red Star Rising at Sea, Admiral Elmo Zumwalt says that the wartime mission of the Soviet naval forces is to defeat western naval forces thereby denying them the ability to use the seas for their own essential purposes. Over a long term the Soviet objective was seen to exert positive control of the seas in all areas of strategic importance. The peacetime mission according to Admiral Zumwalt had three facets: to counterbalance the influence which the US derived from its overseas naval forces, deploying Soviet naval forces in close proximity; to solidify the image of the Soviet Union as a super power with global interests, capable

40 Sergei G. Gorshkov, Red Star Rising at Sea, Theodore A. Neely, trans. (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1974).

of employing military power anywhere Soviet interests may require; and to exert pressures in support of Soviet political goals in areas of particular importance to them.

It was felt in the US that if the Soviet Union accomplished its goals the US would be confronted with the unprecedented situation of Soviet superiority in all facets of military power. It would be an extraordinarily dangerous situation fraught with potential danger of Soviet miscalculation and marked by the already erosion of western confidence and political will. It would it was felt reduce the acceptability of negotiated solutions to US political differences with the Soviet Union and return the super powers to a posture of confrontation or forced negotiations unfavourable to the US.

However, ideas for improving the overall effectiveness of the US navy or for shifting emphasis from power projection to sea control were as varied and numerous as complaints about the navy's lack of capability and imbalance. Picking the future path for the development of naval forces was probably the most difficult problem that faced the US leaders during this period and, in the face of vital US interests needed immediate attention.

The US administration realized the need to maintain a favourable naval balance in the Asia-Pacific region. A widely advocated proposal was for the development of the

navies of American allies and friends in the region - Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, which it was increasingly felt should perform functions of their own defence leaving the US to carry out its larger objectives in the area. It was also realized that the US should endeavour to retain bases in areas where the prospects justified the associated economic and political commitments; and try to find comparative forward locations when political or economic circumstances forced the abandonment of useful installations. The US navy had to prepare for the eventual loss of overseas facilities, take stock of its vital interests in the area and take positive steps to counter Soviet challenges in this important region.

...

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The Pacific region is of great political, economic and strategic importance for the United States. These interests had a commercial genesis in the 19th century. With the defeat of the Spanish fleet in the Spanish American war in 1896, there was increased awareness in the United States of the need to militarily safeguard its interests and recognition of the vital role to be played by the US navy in achieving this objective. The US navy was no longer relegated to perform the subordinate task of coastal defence; it became a primary instrument of US national security.

United States policy through the years has been, with little exception, one of 'forward deployment', by maintaining a large network of well equipped forward naval and air units and base facilities in the Pacific region. To carry out this policy successfully, the US navy endeavours to retain command of the Pacific Ocean, in accordance with the principles enunciated by the naval strategic visionary, Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan at the close of the nineteenth century.

The present day scenerio in this theatre is one of US-Soviet geopolitical and geostrategic contention

where large stakes are involved. Over one third of the world's entire population reside in that region. The vast economic resources of sparsely populated Soviet Siberia, the great productivity and economic dynamism of Japan, the enormous potential of a developing China, the notable manufacturing and trading vitality of South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong, the huge deposits of offshore oil and gas in the Yellow, East China and South China seas, and the mineral riches and other natural treasures of Southeast Asia all combined to make this region increasingly a focus of Soviet-American rivalry. Both super powers came to maintain a strong military and especially naval presence in the area to protect their respective interests.

The United States consciously adopted its forward deployment policy in the Pacific theatre in the early 19th century. This policy yielded visible dividends during major conflicts of the 20th century, commencing with the victory over Japan in 1945, where the US navy wrested the initiative from the imperial Japanese navy and turned the tide of the war in the Pacific. The forward deployment network of bases enabled the US navy to operate in this theatre and in turn protect the bases themselves. The Korean operations in the 1950s, in particular the tactically brilliant amphibious landings at Inchon, enabled US forces, which were in the process of post World War II demobilization to salvage and stabilize the precarious position of South

Korea and stem the advance of communist forces. This projection of military power onto the Asian mainland was only made possible by the favourable position of the US Pacific bases and the unchallenged might of the US navy which operated from them. It was this combination of naval units and bases which later enabled the US to launch itself into Vietnam, sustain large scale military operations on land, sea and in the air for so many years and eventually extricate its forces from the quagmire in 1975.

The strategic situation in the Pacific remained greatly in favour of the US till the late sixties both because of the superior strength of the US navy as well as the strategically important bases acquired by the US through bilateral and multilateral treaties with countries of the Asia-Pacific region, notably Japan, Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines; in addition to their own territories in the region.

The seventies witnessed a perceptible world-wide change in the maritime strategic balance due to the increasing strength of the Soviet navy. This change was more pronounced in the Pacific region due to the reductions in the strength of the US 7th fleet after the end of the Vietnam war. Added to this was a deterioration in the United States base structure in the region. Since the Soviet Union was the only power with the capacity to significantly challenge the US militarily in the Asia-Pacific region, this

became the primary military concern of the US. The Soviet naval threat in the Pacific was seen to lie primarily in their strategic submarine weapons systems capable of being targeted against the United States and in their strong sea denial forces in the form of general purpose air attack submarine and surface ship elements. However, an analysis of the position considering the possible scenerios of conflict revealed that although the US and Soviet nuclear warfare capabilities, both general and localized, were fairly equitably balanced, the United States has an edge over the Soviets in some aspects of conventional naval warfare.

Viewing the tasks both navies may be called upon to perform using conventional forces, estimates indicated that both possessed equivalent capabilities to defend their contiguous waters.

Considering attacks on Sea Lines of Communication, the Soviets had an advantage that the only large-scale Soviet military operations on the Eurasian continent that might have depended to any degree on the sustained use of SLOC's would have involved their forces and installations in North East Asia, and then only if their land lines of communication were severed - presumably by military actions of the People's Republic of China. On the other hand the successful defence of US territories in the Asia-Pacific

region depended crucially on military and energy shipments crossing the Pacific. Since the Soviets had the resources to attack the US Sea Lines of Communication it was important that the US be able to defend and re-establish those routes against substantial opposition.

In face to face engagements against Soviet forces, sometimes termed conventional war fighting, US capabilities were assessed as decreasing. The original Soviet goal of building a force capable of neutralizing western aircraft carriers within the range of the USSR seemed - in Soviet eyes at least to have been largely accomplished. In fact it appeared that the Russians had more assets to do this job than were needed. The size of the US Seventh Fleet decreased drastically in the post-Vietnam era. The shrinkage was, however, partly compensated by qualitative improvements. In the period under discussion the ships assigned to the Seventh Fleet were relatively more versatile than their Soviet Pacific Fleet counterparts which came to face serious problems with bloc obsolescence. However, the introduction of the intermediate range Backfire 'B' Supersonic Bomber enhanced Soviet naval aviation capability and seriously complicated the offensive and defensive tasks of the US navy in the area. It is quite clear that the future balance would depend not only on the improvements the US would make to their systems but also on its ability to upgrade its defences.

However, in sum, the outcome of a navy-on-navy non nuclear campaign seemed to favour the US, although its surface combatants would sustain substantial damages in the process. Surviving forces could then establish effective sea control after the gradual elimination of the remaining enemy submarines. While the Soviet fleet is still not capable of carrying out long term sea control missions with conventional weapons, it is becoming increasingly effective for short term sea-denial operations in specific areas (relatively close to land based support), and it was constantly seeking to extend those areas.

US superiority was however unchallenged where support for ground forces and force projection ashore was concerned. US naval capabilities to support its ground forces with conventional weapons far exceed those of the Soviet Union.

The ability of the US to project both air and amphibious power ashore from naval task forces was its predominant advantage in a relative naval balance. The Soviets had little, if any, means of projecting air power from the sea, and despite their decision to build modest size carriers there was often no indication that they would be equipped with aircraft capable of presenting a sea-based air threat to more than the most meagre array of targets. The Soviet navy did include a limited capability to project amphibious forces along neighbouring coastlines, but those

units had only limited land based naval air support and very slim air or submarine defences other than those that could be provided from shore.

Thus, although the quality of Soviet naval forces improved significantly as befitting a super power, remaining geopolitical and geostrategic weaknesses impaired Soviet ability to counter the US navy in the Pacific region. Indeed, geographical egress constraints, poor climate, the difficulty of homeport resupply, the lack of extended naval air cover, and the dearth of forward staging and maintenance bases offset to a large degree the qualitative force improvements made. It was noted that the situation could change if the Soviets gained access to more land bases beyond their own shores, thus permitting leap-frogging of their coastal forces. For example, it was widely felt in the United States that if the Soviet Union were able to gain permanent access to Vietnamese bases, US forward deployment strategy in the Western Pacific could be in serious jeopardy. As the situation stood then, comparisons favoured the United States capabilities.

Forward deployment has always been a principal ingredient in US military strategy; it was only in the seventies that it was accepted as an integral part of Soviet military planning. US forward deployment in the western Pacific was seen as a pledge of US determination to support

its treaty commitments. While there are many questions about the efficacy of such permanent "presence" roles, they have become institutionalized as proof of US resolve. In the main the Soviet navy is still unable to support forward deployments over the long term. Nonetheless, their growing naval strength made it increasingly possible for the Soviets to undertake mutual support agreements with countries beyond their continent and to demonstrate their commitment with fleet units in the area. In the long run it was feared, this could influence the alignment of presently uncommitted Third World nations. Also, to the extent that any US allies perceived the Soviets as capable of denying the free use of the seas, the resolve and cohesiveness of the alliance would possibly be weakened.

In sum, the basic policy of the United States in the Pacific region till the seventies continued to be one of forward deployment. For this they needed bases and strong naval forces. There can be no question that Soviet naval and maritime resources came to gain world-wide stature and respect during this period. In many cases there was no cause for the US to be overly concerned. In between however, a number of Soviet naval developments were seen in some quarters in the US as a threat to vital US interests. In these situations an all forces, all nations approach was warranted, involving the coordinated use of all available resources whether they be sea or land based, active or

reserve, under the control of the navy, air force or army, whether they belonged to one ally or another or were converted from civilian assets. The US recognized the imperative need to maintain a favourable naval balance in the region as also to look for base options in case it had to withdraw from Japan or the Philippines or both; the projected Soviet anti SLOC threat was expected to be reduced by resisting the expansion of Soviet overseas bases and maintaining or expanding US overseas bases and perhaps most importantly the US came to expect countries of the region to shoulder a greater responsibility and coordinate their policies politically and economically with the US to ensure that an effective military presence could be maintained and rapidly deployed when essential.

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