

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE <i>8 April 97</i>	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED MONOGRAPH	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <i>Naval Forces as the Holding Force in a Win-Hold-Win Strategy</i>			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) <i>Commander Richard W. Durham, USN</i>				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) School of Advanced Military Studies Command and General Staff College Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Command and General Staff College Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES				
12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE DISTRIBUTION UNLIMITED.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) <i>see attached</i>				
19971106 126				
14. SUBJECT TERMS			15. NUMBER OF PAGES	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT UNCLASSIFIED			16. PRICE CODE	
18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED		19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED		20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UNLIMITED

NAVAL FORCES AS THE HOLDING FORCE IN A WIN-HOLD-WIN STRATEGY

A MONOGRAPH

BY

**Commander Richard W. Durham
United States Navy**



**School of Advanced Military Studies
United States Army Command and General Staff
College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

AY 96-97

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MONOGRAPH APPROVAL

Commander Richard W. Durham

Title of Monograph: *Naval Forces as the Holding Force in
a Win-Hold-Win Strategy*

Approved by:

Richard M Swain Monograph Director
Richard M. Swain, Ph.D.

Danny M. Davis Director, School of
COL Danny M. Davis, MA, MMAS Advanced Military
Studies

Philip J. Brookes Director, Graduate
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D. Degree Program

Accepted this 22d Day of May 1997

Naval Forces as the Holding Force in a Win-Hold-Win Strategy

A Monograph

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Commander Richard W. Durham, USN

ABSTRACT

This monograph looks at the reasons to change the national military strategy to a win-hold-win strategy from the existing win-win Two-Major Regional Conflict (MRC) strategy, and then examines naval strategy and doctrine in the context of the required new mission of holding an aggressor in a second MRC. The monograph assesses the requirements to accomplish the holding mission in light of the ongoing revolution in military affairs, and ultimately seeks to address the contributions and limitations of naval forces in stopping and holding an aggressor in a second MRC.

Current defense spending is below that required to both maintain the force structure to execute the two MRC strategy and modernize the force. Cuts in defense spending in support of balancing the U.S. budget, justified by the end of the Cold War and reduced threat, will result in a military force structure below that required to support the existing strategy. Moving to a win-hold-win strategy and smaller force structure will still allow the U.S. to maintain the capability to respond to two MRCs, although at increased risk from both a military and foreign policy perspective. Supporting a smaller force structure could free up the funds required to ensure force modernization.

Naval forces bring a unique set of capabilities to a win-hold-win national military strategy, and can make a decisive contribution to the execution of the holding mission. The Navy white paper, *From the Sea*, committed the naval service to the support of land forces through littoral operations, and the missions of forward presence, crisis response, and power projection ashore. The holding mission in a win-hold-win national military strategy is a logical extension of the enabling mission, and is entirely consistent with the concepts and direction of current naval strategy. It is reasonable to assume that forces designed for the enabling mission could be leveraged, within acceptable cost limits, to successfully carry out the holding mission.

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I. Introduction

The existing National Security Strategy requires that the U.S. Armed Forces be capable of fighting and winning two near simultaneous major regional conflicts (MRCs). The adoption of this strategy resulted from the 1993 Department of Defense (DoD) Bottom-Up Review (BUR) in which various force structure options were war-gamed and analyzed for cost. The Two MRC Strategy defined a military force structure smaller than the Bush Administration's proposed Base Force, but was thought to be fiscally supportable within the planned DoD budget. While it may be argued whether the existing force structure really support the Two MRC Strategy, there is broad agreement that the current DoD budget does not support the force levels required by the strategy, while still allowing for force modernization. In support of attempts to further reduce the U.S. budget deficit, or in response to perceived lessened security needs, the size of the Armed Forces will probably decrease in the future.

Regardless of the exact catalyst, the force structure will likely fall below that required to execute the Two MRC Strategy, and some changes to the U.S. military strategy will be warranted. DoD needs to recognize that a change in strategy will be required in the near future and needs to start planning for a force capable of satisfying recognized U.S. security requirements. Certainly the size and composition of this force will, to some greater or lesser extent, be shaped unavoidably by fiscal limitations. DoD must enter the strategy debate early, with the clear recognition that the existing

force structure cannot be maintained, or it risks the possibility that fiscal constraints alone will be the sole factor in shaping the future force.

The ability to deal with two MRCs has been a consistent theme in our recent national security strategy, and it is a cornerstone of numerous international agreements. By shifting to a strategy that allows us to fight in one MRC while holding in a second (called the “win-hold-win” strategy), also discussed in the 1993 BUR, the U.S. still retains the capability to fight and win in two MRCs with a force structure more in line with the fiscal realities facing the nation.

This paper first looks at the reasons to change the national military strategy to a win-hold-win strategy from the existing Two-MRC strategy. The paper then examines naval strategy and doctrine in the context of the required new mission of holding an aggressor in a second MRC: Is the holding mission consistent with existing naval strategy and doctrine, and what, if any, changes would be required? The paper will look at the requirements to accomplish the holding mission in light of the ongoing revolution in military affairs. This paper ultimately seeks to address the contributions and limitations of naval forces in stopping and holding an aggressor in a second MRC, in support of a win-hold-win national military strategy.

II. National Strategy

A. Cold War

During the Cold War, the U.S. maintained a policy of “containment” with respect to the Soviet Union. The U.S. committed significant forces to the European Continent in order to prevent Soviet domination in an area of vital interest to the U.S. The permanent overseas commitment of significant ground forces to Europe in peacetime resulted in the U.S. initiating a “continental” military strategy--defending Europe by the on-site presence of a large U.S. military force instead of deploying forces as required in response to aggression.¹ This policy of containment, and the associated continental strategy, dictated both our military strategy and force structure--for the first time in history, the U.S. maintained a large standing military in peacetime.² The primary threat to U.S. forces in Europe was a massed Soviet and Warsaw Pact armor attack in multiple echelons, supported by heavy artillery and the possible use of nuclear weapons. Given the obvious threat, heavy emphasis was placed on a force structure, located in theater, with the capability to kill massed armor quickly and efficiently. This resulted in the development of a vast array of very capable systems including the Army’s M-1 Abrams Tank, AH-64 Apache Helicopter and Multiple Launch Rocket System, and the Air Force A-10 Warthog. These systems, used in accordance with the Air-Land Battle Doctrine, proved extremely formidable in defeating a more or less Soviet-style mechanized force, as evidenced by their performance in the Gulf War against Iraq.

B. Existing National Strategy

In 1993, DoD conducted a comprehensive review “to define the strategy, force structure, modernization programs, industrial base and infrastructure needed to meet new danger and seize new opportunities” in light of the end of the Cold War³. The BUR examined four force structure options, including one based on the option to win two nearly simultaneous MRCs, and another allowing the option to win one MRC while holding in a second with force shifting to win the second after concluding the first.⁴ The BUR concluded that the option to win two near simultaneous MRCs was prudent as a deterrent to a second aggressor in the event of a conflict and that fielding forces to win two MRCs provided an insurance policy against unpredictable future threats⁵. In light of significant U.S. involvement in peacekeeping operations since the BUR and the President’s National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, it is interesting that the fourth force structure option analyzed by the BUR, forces to win two near simultaneous MRCs with additional forces for missions such as peacekeeping, was discounted on the grounds of excessive cost for only a slight increase in military capability.

When the Clinton Administration entered office in 1992, it was immediately forced to address defense policy issues that included serious funding shortfalls in the proposed Base Force. A pressing need carried over from the previous administration was the requirement to redesign U.S. defense policy to reflect the changing global

security environment that emerged from the end of the bipolar world; this to be accomplished with the goal of balancing the nation's ends, means and will.⁶ The balancing exercise had to be carried out in a timely manner to avoid a rapid hollowing out of the active military forces or a free fall in the defense budget.⁷ However, at the time of the BUR, the administration had yet to offer a well-defined national security policy. This lack of a coherent national strategy as a precept for the BUR resulted in a largely budget-based review where the rationale and force package design were based simply on the fiscal realities of a new top line for the defense budget.⁸

Following the BUR, the General Accounting Office (GAO) reviewed DoD assumptions used in the analysis portion of the BUR to determine if they supported DoD conclusions that the projected force could execute the Two MRC strategy.⁹ Among other findings, the GAO concluded that the Army did not have sufficient support forces to maintain its current combat force, and in fact would have trouble providing all required support for a single regional conflict.¹⁰ The GAO found that DoD did not account for required readiness upgrades to forces already deployed to other operations, such as peacekeeping, before these forces could be deployed to a regional conflict.¹¹ Finally, some force enhancements (including strategic mobility, propositioned equipment and firepower improvements to various systems) to U.S. capabilities, described by the BUR as key to the projected force's ability to fight and win two near simultaneous MRCs, may not be completed as planned.¹²

Andrew F. Krepinevich, writing for the Defense Budget Project, a Washington, DC based think tank, analyzed the cost of the BUR force versus the anticipated DoD budget and concluded there was an initial \$20 billion per year shortfall in the FYDP outyears, likely to grow as operating and procurement costs rise.¹³ Because of the vast quantities of equipment purchased in the 1980s, DoD can under-fund procurement in the short term. However, this will only compound the very real procurement shortfall that will be faced in the outyears.¹⁴ Any further cuts in the DoD Research and Development accounts, already seriously reduced despite pledges of support, would have long-term impacts even more detrimental than the procurement shortfalls.¹⁵ Senator John McCain echoes recent congressional testimony by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that procurement accounts are seriously under funded and we must reverse the practice of postponing essential weapons modernization to maintain the operations tempo and readiness of the BUR force.¹⁶ In essence, we have forgone the very modernization programs that were undertaken to ensure the effectiveness of the smaller BUR force.¹⁷

The BUR requirement to fight and win two near simultaneous MRCs is now part of our National Security Policy, and results in an emphasis within DoD on near-term force readiness and conventional regional conflicts.¹⁸ Maintaining this near-term capability to defeat possible regional aggressors diverts increasingly scarce resources and may well prevent us from modernizing the force or meeting the growing threats of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The force structure to

defeat a twentieth century regional threat is not the force structure that will be required to defeat a twenty-first century global power, but may be all we have if we continue on our current course.¹⁹ Senator McCain's conclusions on the BUR force and resultant strategy are very clear when he states, "current U.S. strategy and force planning are too focused on maintaining the force structure that proved effective in winning the last war, while paying too little attention to the uncertain nature of future conflicts."²⁰ Regardless of any discussion of the appropriateness of the BUR defense posture, it simply cannot be implemented within the planned DoD budget, and, given the trend of the defense budget in real dollars, the additional resources required by the BUR force are unlikely to be forthcoming.²¹

C. Towards a New National Military Strategy

If the Two MRC Strategy, as outlined in the BUR, is not a viable option for the nation, what strategy and accompanying force structure will meet U.S. security requirements? Senator John McCain has proposed a minimum force level that could "decisively prevail" in a single generic MRC, with the ability to defeat a lesser threat at the same time.²² His suggested force must be affordable, flexible in nature, capable of responding quickly, balance existing security needs against future requirements, and should be designed to complement the military forces of our allies.²³ Naval forces would be central to forward presence, crisis response, and power projection capability, most likely responding in the early phases of a conflict.²⁴ While the senator views air

power as a critical element of any future force structure, he believes we should rely more on allied capabilities for ground combat missions.²⁵

During the BUR process, this single MRC strategy was discounted on the grounds it would require a “scaling back or end of certain existing mutual defense treaties and commitments, with a corresponding loss of U.S. influence.”²⁶ A single MRC strategy is far less comforting to U.S. allies than the existing Two MRC Strategy, especially if the U.S. desires a priori commitment of allied forces from a potential conflict region to a U.S.-led coalition. No U.S. ally wants to feel that his region cannot expect support because of a previous U.S. commitment of military forces. In fact, a single MRC strategy may also prove counterproductive to U.S. security interests in the long run by giving U.S. allies the sense that they may have to “go it alone,” making the desired participation of allied forces difficult to obtain and thus making coalition-building almost impossible.

Clearly we must balance the security needs of the nation with the resources available, both now and in the future, by designing a flexible force structure for near-term security that allows for development and procurement of systems to deal with future threats.

There are a number of strategies and associated force structures located somewhere between the existing Two MRC Strategy and the single MRC strategy proposed by Senator McCain and others. During the BUR process, the “middle ground” win-hold-win option, discussed above, was analyzed, but not selected for

reasons that included increased risk in executing a two-conflict strategy,²⁷ and the fact that the cost of the two MRC force structure analyzed during the BUR was not significantly greater than that of the win-hold-win option.²⁸ In reality, instead of reducing risk by adopting the Two MRC Strategy within the current DoD budget, the risk has simply been moved from the near term to the future, which is not an uncommon tactic. The assumed relatively small cost differential between the Two MRC Strategy and the win-hold-win strategy would not solve the future funding shortfalls in the DoD budget using the win-hold-win force structure option that was outlined in the BUR. However, the cost savings achieved by moving to a smaller but more flexible and more lethal force, that can satisfy the win-hold-win criteria, may well be enough to buy back the delayed procurement and research and development portions of the budget that are essential to modernize the force for the twenty-first century.

The U.S. can no longer afford a national military strategy requiring the current force structure size, or a force structure comprised of combat elements or systems designed for single missions. The reduction in U.S. land and air forces stationed abroad requires a flexible and mobile force structure that is capable of responding to a broad range of overseas missions that run from foreign military challenges to U.S. interests to peacekeeping. The same ground forces that train for combat in a major regional conflict must be capable of humanitarian relief, and must be rapidly transportable anywhere in the world. Air and naval forces must be prepared to enforce

United Nations sanctions one day and achieve total air and sea superiority or deliver precision munitions the next.

The initial crisis response to a military challenge of U.S. national interests should consist of forward deployed naval forces, and these naval forces should be the candidate of choice to comprise the holding force in a win-hold-win national military strategy. If the situation warrants, forward deployed naval forces must be able to ensure the safe and rapid movement of heavy land and air forces into theater to deal with the an escalating regional contingency. Once additional forces are brought into theater, naval forces can contribute to air and ground firepower or respond as required to another potential crisis region in the world. Should U.S. forces be committed to a major regional conflict, naval forces that respond to a second regional conflict or potential regional conflict must first be able to deter, then be able to hold an aggressor at bay. The "holding force" in a second MRC would not be expected to defeat the aggressor, but, added to local security forces, would prevent him from achieving his aims through use of precision firepower, advanced command and control and precise battlefield intelligence. Once victory has been achieved in the first regional conflict, adequate U.S. and allied forces would be re-deployed to provide the required combat power to achieve decisive victory in the second regional conflict.

It must be clearly understood, up front, that sizing the armed forces for a win-hold-win strategy equates to increased near-term risk. There is increased political risk to U.S. foreign policy, and increased military risk to the ability to fight and win two

MRCs. Reductions in U.S. force levels may result in regional allies increasing the size of their armed forces to compensate. This in turn may lead to a reduced capacity on the part of the U.S. to shape the policies of other countries or influence the course of events in certain regions of the world. Strategy is about balancing ends, ways and means, in the present as well as in the future. While the world may be less predictable now than during the Cold War, the threats to vital U.S. interest are far less immediate. The time to accept risk is now, since one cannot predict the future with any certainty. Arriving at some future conflict with a Cold-War force could prove disastrous. The purpose of accepting risk now is not to say that increased risk is necessarily good or desirable, but may well be the only way to modernize for the future.

III. Naval Strategy and Doctrine

A. Current Naval Strategy

The end of the Cold War caused a significant shift in the articulated strategy of U.S. Naval forces, mirroring the national security strategy shift from preparing to respond to a single global threat to addressing lesser regional challenges. The U.S. Maritime Strategy of the 1980s was focused primarily on supporting NATO land forces by keeping the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) open in the event of a conflict in Europe.²⁹ Other naval missions included supporting land operations in Europe by applying pressure to Soviet flanks, and protecting U.S. ballistic missile submarines, as well as hunting Soviet ballistic missile submarines.³⁰ To accomplish the missions

outlined in the Maritime Strategy, Navy Secretary John Lehman pursued a 600 ship Navy, designed to dominate completely our single significant foe, the Soviet Union.

In 1992, the Chief of Naval Operations published *From the Sea: Preparing the Naval Service for the 21st Century*, marking a new direction for the Navy and focusing on joint operations, forward presence, crisis response, and power projection operations.³¹ Hardly the repudiation of blue water naval principal as viewed by some, it was an acknowledgment of the ongoing shift in U.S. defense policy to a regional focus. It also postulated a recognition that control of the sea can be exploited to allow establishment of control on land.³² The use of naval power for missions other than an all-out war at sea is not novel, and intervention in local crises and overseas conflicts has been routine for U.S. naval forces since World War II.³³ However, despite the day-to-day employment of U.S. naval forces, doctrine, fleet training and acquisition programs all emphasized the overriding requirement to defeat the Soviet Navy at sea.³⁴ *From the Sea* is an unprecedented document in that it explicitly defines littoral operations, crisis intervention and support of land forces as the primary mission of the U.S. naval forces.³⁵ Never before has a major naval power placed the priorities for sea control and preparation for the next major war behind that of coastal operations and crisis intervention.³⁶ Even the British Navy, at the height of *Pax Britannica*, never viewed policing the empire as more than a passing collateral duty, while the ships were built and the crews were trained for the always anticipated major fleet action.³⁷

In 1994, the Secretary of the Navy published a follow-on white paper entitled *Forward ...From the Sea*, which maintained the commitment to the ideas expressed in *From the Sea*. *Forward...From the Sea* refined the concepts, discussing how the Navy would meet the challenges of forward presence, crisis response, and regional contingencies, and added an economic dimension to U.S. naval strategy. The commitment to the concepts described in *From the Sea* are carried forward in the Navy's doctrine formulation and acquisition program as expressed in the current FYDP, marking a remarkably quick implementation of the new naval strategy. To understand the Navy's role in supporting the proposed national security strategy, it is essential to look at how the current naval missions of forward presence, crisis response and support of regional contingencies, are inexorably linked within the context of the present strategy.

B. Naval Strategic Missions

1. Peacetime Forward Presence

Military forces are typically designed for worst-case demands that include, in descending order of importance: global war, regional conflict, and support of foreign policy. The probability of employment of these forces is typically in reverse order.³⁸ This requires care at the national level to ensure that an overall force structure is designed with the flexibility to be capable of handling both the most demanding and most probable missions. The National Security Strategy of Engagement and

Enlargement recognizes that the need for deploying U.S. military forces in peacetime and the forward presence mission must be an important factor in determining the overall force structure.³⁹ Some of the benefits of forward presence specifically outlined in the National Security Strategy include the requirement to:

- Give form and substance to our bilateral and multinational security commitments.
- Demonstrate our determination to defend U.S. and allied interests in critical regions, deterring hostile nations from acting contrary to those interests.
- Provide forward elements for rapid response in crisis as well as the bases, ports and other infrastructure essential for deployment of U.S.-based forces by air, sea and land.
- Enhance the effectiveness of coalition operations, including peace operations, by improving our ability to operate with other nations.
- Allow the United States to use its position of trust to prevent the development of power vacuums and dangerous arms races, thereby underwriting regional stability by precluding threats to regional security.⁴⁰

Bounded by two oceans, the U.S. is fundamentally a maritime nation, dependent on overseas trade, with numerous overseas interests and security commitments. The liberal world economy, a by-product of the Cold War, is vulnerable to post-Cold War disorder and becomes a primary reason for maintaining forces overseas.⁴¹ Decisions made at the start of the Cold War resulted in a significant forward deployment of U.S. forces to confront, and thus contain, Soviet expansion. The end of the Cold War resulted in another decision point with regards to the commitment of U.S. forces and the future of forward engagement. While withdrawing much of the land and air forces

from Europe was necessary in light of reassessed security needs following the end of the Cold War, U.S. security still demands a visible and robust forward presence.

U.S. allies, as well as U.S. foes, look at forward presence as a signal of U.S. commitment in deterring or stopping regional aggression. It is not difficult to imagine a rearmed and nuclear capable Japan resulting from confrontation with a nuclear-armed China in a power vacuum consequent to a U.S. disengagement in Asia and the Pacific rim.⁴² The coalition operations that were conducted during Desert Storm would not have been possible without the combined force interoperability, both material and doctrine in nature, resulting from frequent exercises with allies. From a political perspective, the reality of frequent combined exercises makes the acceptance of coalition operations that much easier for our allies to accept.

While allies want a clear, unambiguous U.S. presence visible to a potential aggressor, some, such as Saudi Arabia, cannot afford the internal political costs associated with visible U.S. forces stationed on their soil. This does not mean that we should in any way reduce forward presence missions or forces, but forces dedicated to the forward presence mission may well have to re-deploy to the decks of U.S. warships in the oceans and waters surrounding Europe and Asia.⁴³ In fact, with the reduction in U.S. land and air forces overseas, U.S. foreign policy and the forward presence mission will come to depend heavily on forward deployed naval forces.⁴⁴ This dependence on naval forces will continue to grow as budgetary pressures force further reductions in air and ground forces stationed in the continental U.S.⁴⁵ Accomplishment

of the forward presence mission requires presence on station, capable of rapid, powerful and sustained response, not the “virtual presence” offered by forces responding from U.S. bases.⁴⁶ Global reach, while useful for a nuclear deterrence strategy, is not the same as a sustained and visible U.S. forward presence, and does not satisfy any of the reasons for overseas presence listed in the National Security Strategy.⁴⁷ On-scene U.S. naval presence derives much of its value not from its inherent combat power, but from what it represents: a U.S. commitment to bring additional forces to bear if required—a link to the forces stationed in the U.S.⁴⁸ Overseas presence is required for the nation to function in a secure environment, “the cost of doing business,” and there is no adequate shortcut.⁴⁹ The only option to overseas presence is withdrawal and the loss of ability to influence overseas events in favor of U.S. interests. Withdrawal and disengagement will ultimately lead to a less stable and more dangerous world, resulting in any short-term savings being expended, with heavy interest, in future conflicts.

2. Crisis Response

Within the context of joint operation planning and execution, joint doctrine defines a crisis as “an incident or situation involving a threat to the United States, its territories, citizens, military forces, and possessions or vital interests that develops rapidly and creates a condition of such diplomatic, economic, political, or military importance that commitment of U.S. military forces and resources is contemplated to

achieve national objectives.”⁵⁰ Navy Doctrine goes on to define crisis response as “the ability to maintain the forces and agility to respond quickly and decisively to regional crises with a range of options.”⁵¹ Because of the broad range of possible crisis scenarios, *Forward ...From the Sea* emphasizes providing flexible forward presence force packages, Aircraft Carrier Battle Groups (CVBGs) and Amphibious Ready Groups (ARGs) with special operations-capable Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs), to allow the theater commanders an equally broad range of credible response options.⁵²

Forward-deployed naval forces have frequently been used as a crisis response instrument of foreign policy. The reasons for the use of naval forces include a deep-rooted reluctance in the minds of the American people, as well as the Congress, to see U.S. ground forces committed to a crisis without a clear-cut rationale. There is far less public reluctance to commit naval ships and aircraft to a crisis in the early stages, making them a more politically-safe and often-used crisis response force. Naval forces allow decision-makers to initiate a response, while still assessing the foreign policy as well as the internal political implications of U.S. intervention in an overseas crisis situation. It should be clearly recognized that more difficult crisis response scenarios may still require the commitment of U.S. air and ground forces if they are to achieve desired U.S. policy end states. In the situations where the national command authority decides that commitment of ground forces is appropriate, naval forces will act as an “enabling force” to ensure their safe introduction into theater. In other situations

where U.S. intervention is not deemed appropriate, the naval force can be quietly withdrawn.

3. Regional Conflict

The existing naval strategy for dealing with an MRC differs from the Cold War European model in that it can not be assumed that air and sea ports of debarkation for land and air forces arriving in theater will be uncontested. The capability to seize and defend ports of entry in a region will require naval forces to fight in and dominate a littoral region far from the blue-water battles envisioned during Cold War war-at-sea scenarios. The possible need to blunt a land attack in protection of sea and air ports of debarkation is mentioned, adding another dimension to littoral warfare. However, the primary focus of ensuring the safe entry of forces into theater, the re-supply of forward land and air elements through strategic sealift and protection of the SLOCs remain unchanged from the 1980s Maritime Strategy.⁵³

This, by no means, is meant to minimize the impact on naval strategy, thinking and policy, resulting from the concepts introduced in *From the Sea*. The need to fight in the littorals in support of coalition land forces in order to accomplish the naval mission has resulted in a fundamental reappraisal of required force structure and rebirth in the interest in naval doctrine.

C. Doctrine

Any discussion of naval doctrine and its utility must start with a brief discussion of how the naval service views naval doctrine. Realizing the need to develop and articulate the new concepts expressed in *From the Sea*, the Chief of Naval Operations moved to establish the Naval Doctrine Command as the central authority for development of naval doctrine.⁵⁴ *Naval Doctrine Publication (NDP) 1, Naval Warfare* describes naval doctrine as “conceptual—a shared way of thinking that is not directive,” designed to bridge the gap between the naval portion of the national military strategy and tactics, techniques and procedures.⁵⁵ Naval doctrine is considerably less detailed than Army doctrine because naval doctrine is designed to be a starting point for developing solutions to problems, not the solution to the tactical problem at hand.

While the naval forces retain the traditional missions of strategic deterrence, sea superiority, and protection of maritime trade, the focus of naval operations has shifted to regional support of U.S. interests, with an emphasis on operations in the littorals.⁵⁶ Naval expeditionary forces, capable of maintaining a strong forward presence and projecting sustained power ashore when required, are the key to naval operations in peacetime. Naval expeditionary forces are cohesive, self-sustaining and highly mobile, capable of executing a variety of missions, thereby offering the national command authority a broad range of response options. These options range from day-to-day operations that include forward presence, humanitarian relief and peacekeeping operations to fighting in major regional conflicts.⁵⁷

In their broadest sense, naval operations in war consist of establishing control of the sea to the degree required to support U.S. national security objectives, and conducting war from the sea to achieve land-based objectives. Conducting war from the sea extends naval influence ashore, taking the battle to the enemy through power projection.⁵⁸ Naval power projection alone may be sufficient to achieve national objectives, or may enable the introduction of required land and air forces into theater through seizing hostile ports and air fields.⁵⁹ Naval forces must operate in and dominate a multidimensional battlespace that encompasses air, surface, subsurface, land, space and time.⁶⁰ This battlespace varies in size, moving with naval forces, and is only limited by the dimensions of the region that naval forces must control in order to achieve the desired objective. Battlespace dominance is a fundamental element of naval doctrine and required by naval forces for the execution of the sea control and the power projection missions.

D. Future Naval Strategy and Doctrine

1. Future Naval Strategy

The strategic value of sea power flows from its ability to influence events on land selectively, in overseas locations, in pursuit of U.S. national policy.⁶¹ Recent naval strategy and employment concepts have more clearly focused the use of naval forces on operations in the littorals to perform the strategic missions including forward presence, crisis response and support of regional contingencies. If the national security

strategy moves to a win-hold-win approach, naval strategy, as a support component of the national security strategy, must again adapt to support it. If the driving reason to move to a win-hold-win strategy is to allow for modernization of forces, then it is important to leverage existing and planned forces. Clearly, creating additional force structure to act as the holding force in a win-hold-win strategy is counterproductive and only continues down the questionable path of preparing for yesterday's war.

Providing the holding element of a win-hold-win national strategy is a logical extension of the uses of naval power, and is consistent with the vision and concepts presented in *From the Sea*. Under the current strategy, naval forces enable the introduction of heavy land and air forces into a region and then remain in the region to contribute to coalition firepower. In the proposed strategy, naval forces would perform their enabling role in the first MRC, then shift to a second MRC as required to deter/hold an aggressor. Acting as a holding force (or enabling an ally to succeed in holding) in the second MRC really only extends in time and distance the requirement to safely enable the introduction of U.S. forces into the second theater. This is necessary because of the requirement to achieve prescribed victory conditions in the first MRC, before U.S. land and air forces can re-deploy to the second. Because of the similarity between the enabling mission and holding mission, it is reasonable to assume that forces designed to achieve the first mission successfully could be leveraged to succeed in the second mission. Just as importantly, forces designed for the enabling mission could likely be leveraged, within acceptable cost limits, to perform the holding mission.

2. Future Naval Doctrine

Understanding the use of naval forces to dominate the oceans and seas of the world is easy to grasp in terms of the battlespace dominance concept presented in naval doctrine. It is far less intuitive how naval forces will dominate land warfare to secure ports and airfields. Simply implying that naval forces will maintain a “bubble” of protection over a port, coastal airfield, or to whatever depth inland is required, is understandable in the context of air defense or theater ballistic missile defense, but not against other land threats. A detailed explanation is not required in naval doctrine, but naval doctrine must articulate a satisfactory concept for dealing with the land threat, recognizing that it is distinctly different and requires a different solution. Numerous historical examples highlight the problems faced by naval forces in coming to grips with a land power, or faced by land forces in come to grips with a naval power.

Technical advances have made it possible for naval forces to project power inland to an unprecedented degree, but doctrine does not provide a unifying principal for the effective, focused use of this capability to engage a land power. Throughout history, technology has often outstripped doctrine, resulting in piecemeal employment of potentially decisive weapons based on out-of-date concepts and tactics. The use of aircraft carriers as scouts for the battlefleet, the use of tanks for infantry support, and limiting submarine warfare to engaging combatants are all examples of new technology used without new ideas. The development of the Air-Land Battle Doctrine of the 1980s

integrated the use of several high technology weapons systems, both on land and air, to achieve an effect greater than the sum of the individual parts. The Air Force concept of parallel warfare attempts to leverage technologically advanced weapons systems, in an integrated manner, to achieve a desired result on the battlefields of tomorrow.⁶²

Simplistically, battlespace dominance and power projection can be viewed as offering capabilities to deal with conflict, where parallel warfare offers a definable solution to conflict. This is indicative of the fundamental difference in viewpoints between the Naval Service and Air Force, regarding the waging of conflict. Battlespace dominance is a solution to the problem of crisis response and stems from the supporting nature of naval forces in a major conflict—naval forces alone cannot achieve victory in a land war. Air forces, on the other hand, have sought to be decisive in land warfare by offering an antiseptic solution to the far less appealing alternative of foot soldiers slogging through mud. Since the time of Giulio Douhet, air forces have sought to procure victory by focusing on strategic targets rather than combat forces on the immediate battlefield.⁶³ It may well be argued that naval forces have learned their limitations in land warfare from repeated historical lessons, whereas air forces are simply too new to have come to a similar conclusion. Regardless of the ultimate effects of air power on land warfare, the results of waging parallel warfare were spectacular during Desert Storm and the Air Force deserves a great deal of credit for developing a cohesive concept for the use of their forces. Parallel warfare has engendered a worthwhile debate within the military because of the results it offers up to decision-

makers. Naval doctrine must more clearly define the intended results on land if naval forces are to have a significant effect in land warfare in the future. If naval forces are to have an immediate, decisive effect on land, either as an enabling force or by executing a holding mission, naval doctrine must clearly articulate what this effect should be.

IV. Mission Execution

The increased capabilities offered by the ongoing revolution in military affairs are fundamental to the ability of U.S. forces to successfully execute the holding mission required by a win-hold-win national military strategy.

A. Revolution in Military Affairs

The stunning performance of U.S. combat forces and weapon systems in the Gulf War indicated a fundamental change in the conduct of war was taking place. The success of precision weapons, dependent on advances in guidance technology, and the timely application of intelligence from new surveillance platforms, led many to announce the arrival of a revolution in military affairs (RMA). As dazzling as the performance of high-technology weaponry might be, advances in weaponry alone do not constitute an RMA.

According to Andrew Krepinevich, an RMA “occurs when the application of new technologies into a significant number of military systems combines with innovative concepts and organizational application in a way that fundamentally alters

the character and conduct of conflict. It does so by producing a dramatic increase—often an order of magnitude or greater—in the combat potential and military effectiveness of armed forces.”⁶⁴ An RMA is postulated to increase combat effectiveness dramatically through four simultaneous and mutually supportive changes: in technology, in system development, in organizational innovations, and in organizational adaptations.⁶⁵ Many of the necessary technological innovations required by the current RMA have been incorporated in systems that are fielded or that will be fielded in the near future.⁶⁶ While these technologies have improved vastly the capabilities of U.S. forces, the full promise of the current RMA cannot be realized until accompanying changes in doctrine and force organization are made. Simply overlaying improved technology on the existing force structure and operational concepts will not provide the full increase in capability theorized to be available as a result of an RMA.

Each RMA witnessed by history has exhibited a unique development path and has required varying periods of time to reach maturity.⁶⁷ Since RMAs are really about solving problems, the degree to which DoD pursues the current RMA will depend upon the military challenges perceived by DoD today and in the future, as well as the benefits expected to realized from following the process.⁶⁸ If existing U.S. capabilities are perceived to be so much better than any regional threat or possible peer competitor, the cost and risk of pursuing the RMA may not be warranted. The question of whether to pursue the RMA must rely ultimately upon what missions the military will be required to perform in support of the national security strategy. If the force

enhancements offered by the RMA do not match those required to support U.S. strategy, there is little incentive to advance the RMA process.

While pursuing the current RMA offers military planners dramatically increased capabilities, the process will likely include some false starts and blind allies, and it is not without some risk. Risks associated with pursuing the RMA include a potential arms race to match anticipated U.S. capabilities, possible over-reliance on military power and the chance that the path of the current RMA may not deliver the capabilities needed to face future enemies.⁶⁹ Also, advances associated with the RMA may widen the gap between U.S. and allied capabilities, resulting in significant integration problems in future coalition warfare. However, a U.S. military force, centered around standoff, precision weapons and information dominance, may be more politically usable because of the ability to avoid close combat and the casualties associated with conventional military operations.⁷⁰ The RMA may allow the U.S. to preserve any future margin of military superiority by delaying the emergence of a peer competitor.⁷¹ A potential peer competitor might decide to forgo the cost and effort required to reach parity with U.S. military capabilities, as well as the cost to keep pace with continued improvements.⁷² Finally, the U.S. may be forced to pursue the RMA simply to avoid obsolescence of the existing military force structure.⁷³

The emerging RMA can be characterized by the capabilities to: (1) rapidly locate, assess and respond to enemy threats, (2) promptly strike the threat with standoff, precision weapons, and (3) employ an optimum but not overwhelming and

highly survivable force.⁷⁴ Information dominance and standoff precision weapons will allow U.S. forces to conduct pinpoint strikes at considerable distances. When coupled with the doctrine and the force structure focused on employment of standoff precision weapons, the use of these weapons will be capable of producing decisive results in future military operations. A logical progression of the RMA process will result in an operational concept of disengaged combat for the employment of U.S. forces.⁷⁵ The use of long-range surveillance, superior command and control and standoff precision weapons will allow U.S. forces to remain at a distance from the enemy and still inflict damage on enemy forces, while staying well outside of the effective range of enemy weapons systems.⁷⁶ The force commander will seek to engage the enemy with long-range aircraft, helicopters, cruise missiles and artillery, while maneuvering to prevent the use of enemy tanks and artillery.⁷⁷ Recognizing that it would be impossible to conduct combat effectively outside the range of all enemy systems, disengaged combat would establish a hierarchy for targeting enemy systems, concentrating on longer range systems first.⁷⁸

Disengaged combat places a premium on the development of longer range offensive systems, rather than those designed for close combat. Proximity to the target is less relevant in the successful application of firepower. Massed forces are not be required to achieve the effects of massed firepower. The emphasis for force protection will shift from additional inches of armor plate to miles of separation from the enemy

threat. Military system procurement may shift to buying less sophisticated platforms that can deliver standoff, precision weapons in greater quantity.

The ultimate value of the RMA process must be to inject forward thinking into DoD force planning by providing a methodology for technology acquisition, force organization and doctrine development as the U.S. military enters the twenty-first century.⁷⁹ The arrival of a peer competitor or serious regional threat should not be required to overcome the inertia associated with military change.

B. Achieving the Desired Effect

When U.S. military forces must be committed to a second MRC under a win-hold-win strategy, only the forces that, when added to the forces on the scene, are necessary to stop and hold the aggressor are likely to be available for the second MRC. The aggregate forces assigned the holding mission must be able to apply sufficient, directed combat power to stop and hold the aggressor short of his ultimate goal, and continue to hold the aggressor until sufficient resources are available from the first MRC to go over to the offensive. Appropriate application of limited firepower becomes essential if the holding mission is to be accomplished.

It is reasonable to assume that a regional aggressor has made a loss-benefit calculation, and is willing to accept a cost in order to achieve his goals. The combat power applied by military forces assigned the holding mission must render the aggressor incapable of further forward movement immediately, and ensure that the

degree of loss sustained by the aggressor exceeds acceptable levels or prevents recovery of the aggressor force. Success in stopping the aggressor force would be readily apparent, but insight into what constitutes unacceptable or irrecoverable loss, which would therefore prevent further attempted advances, are much more difficult to determine. The concepts of parallel warfare, as proposed by Air Force Colonel John Warden during the Gulf War, are very useful in linking the mission success criteria to the conduct of the campaign in the holding phase of a win-hold-win strategy.

Parallel warfare has been defined as:

“the simultaneous application of force (in time, space, and at each level of war) against key systems to effect paralysis on the subject organization’s ability to function as it desires. The object of parallel warfare is effective control of the opponent’s strategic activity.”⁸⁰

Parallel warfare results from viewing the enemy as a system with five distinct groupings that can be thought of as concentric spheres: (1) fielded military forces at the periphery, (2) moving inward, the general population, (3) the state transportation system, (4) essential industries such as power production and petroleum refining, and (5) at the center, the national command structure.⁸¹ Using the concepts of parallel warfare, air attacks would focus on simultaneous destruction of strategic centers of gravity within the innermost spheres to paralyze the decision making and command and control apparatus of the nation, while bypassing operational forces in the outer ring. Parallel warfare focuses on simultaneous attacks to prevent the enemy’s recovery and

the ability to respond effectively.⁸² The concepts of parallel warfare determined the initial focus of the recent Gulf War air campaign.

Parallel warfare recognizes that it may be necessary to deal first with an enemy's operational forces, prior to focusing on strategic assets, because operational forces may be threatening allied centers of gravity or because of associated political concerns.⁸³ The Gulf War air campaign was able to focus attacks on strategic targets immediately because significant coalition ground power was available at the start of the air campaign, effectively fixing the Iraqi army and taking away its ability to threaten allied centers of gravity. The aggressor's operational forces can also be dealt with as a system, similar to the enemy state as a whole.⁸⁴ The operational force has centers of gravity surrounding that can be exploited in a manner similar to those of the enemy state.⁸⁵ Potential targets will likely include the operational command and control system, the logistics infrastructure, which includes mobile support units essential to support a modern mechanized army, road and rail systems necessary to move the army, and aviation assets supporting the army. Under the concepts of parallel warfare, attacks on tactical units (armor, mechanized infantry, etc.) would be avoided if possible because of the difficulty in targeting these assets.⁸⁶

A massed invasion force would present a large, readily identifiable signature for a variety of current and future surveillance systems, allowing tracking and target identification by the Joint Forces Air Coordination Center (JFACC).⁸⁷ The invasion force, both mobile support and tactical units, would then be vulnerable to attack and

destruction by air- and sea-launched standoff precision weapons as well as more conventional air-delivered munitions. Based on the location of the invasion force, the vital logistics support areas and transportation links could be determined and prioritized for attack. In the face of sustained, precision attacks, based on accurate, timely surveillance and rapid analysis, the enemy would not develop the forward staging areas required for penetration by a large mobile army.⁸⁸ Consequently, the aggressor could not develop the required force margin to make offensive operations possible. The parallel warfare campaign would then expand to encompass additional logistics and transportation infrastructure targets, as the focus of the campaign shifts to influencing and paralyzing the strategic center of the national command process. Paralysis within the national command structure, and preoccupation with infrastructure damage would prevent any resumption of enemy offensive operations.

In the context of stopping an aggressor's invasion force, the relative unimportance placed on engaging fast-moving mechanized armored forces by the concepts of parallel warfare must be reexamined. The parallel warfare concept places emphasis on attacking the command and control and the logistics support aspects of an aggressor's force, assuming that the tactical forces will be incapable of further coordinated action following their destruction. Certainly, the destruction of the command and control and the logistics support of operational forces would have a devastating effect on the offensive capability and relative freedom of action of the enemy force. However, there would be an unavoidable lag time between the start of

attacks and the time that an invasion force would be forced to halt because of inadequate support and loss of operational level guidance. In many areas of the world, the distance that a mobile invasion force could penetrate during this lag time, before the effects of the attack would be felt, may allow the aggressor to achieve his ultimate objective, or place a U.S. ally in an untenable position. Parallel warfare requires a detailed understanding of the enemy system in order to link cause and effect in an air campaign. The level of understanding required of the aggressor's system may not be available because of the crisis nature of the invasion or because of dedication of intelligence and planning assets in the first MRC. Also, operational forces are designed with considerable flexibility to adapt in challenging situations. Failure to destroy sufficient numbers of aggressor tactical units would present the risk that an unanticipated solution to the logistics and command and control problems could be found and offensive operations would resume. While the concepts of parallel warfare have much to offer in formulating an air campaign, it is not an exact science and some degree of trial and error will inevitably occur.

The Gulf War air campaign highlights both the difficulties with linking cause and effect in an air campaign and the importance of focusing attacks on ground forces. The air campaign, based on the concepts of parallel warfare, was designed to compel Iraqi forces to leave Kuwait by attacking key Iraqi targets such as leadership and command and control; nuclear, biological, chemical, electrical, military and oil production facilities; bridges, railroads, and port infrastructure; air defense, naval,

missile, and ground forces, particularly the Republican Guard.⁸⁹ The air campaign planners believed that within a month, Iraqi forces would flee Kuwait or be destroyed in place, and Saddam Hussein would be removed from office or his ability to control Iraq would be damaged beyond repair.⁹⁰

The air campaign alone would not compel Saddam Hussein to abandon Kuwait, and the focus of air attacks shifted to Iraqi front line forces in Kuwait in preparation for the planned ground offensive. In an effort to increase the number of armor and artillery kills, and further reduce the Iraqi army to achieve an attrition rate desired to start the ground offensive, laser-guided precision bombs were employed against Iraqi mechanized forces.⁹¹ The destruction rate of Iraqi forces rose dramatically with the use of precision weapons. In the face of punishing air attacks, Iraqi forces in Kuwait could not maneuver, and could only remain dug in, waiting for the coalition ground offensive.⁹² Iraqi ground forces in Kuwait continued to receive reduced but sufficient supplies to remain in Kuwait, and they maintained rudimentary communications with Baghdad through the extensive use of buried wire.⁹³ It is certainly questionable whether the reduced supply rate or these remaining command and control links would have supported any further offensive operations.⁹⁴ Although air power could not remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the attrition of their operational command and control and logistics support, combined with the destruction of tactical units, effectively removed offensive action as an option for Saddam Hussein's army.

Improved surveillance and precision weapons have eased significantly the problem of locating and targeting mobile units. In response to an invasion of an ally, operational ground units are a center of gravity that can and must be attacked. A combination of destruction of logistical support, command and control, and mobile ground units, is the most appropriate method of stopping and holding an invasion force, given the limited firepower of a U.S. holding force in a win-hold-win strategy. The concept of simultaneous attacks on key centers of gravity within priority target groups is fundamental to the design of such a holding campaign.

Based on the discussion above, a holding campaign might consist of two distinct phases. The first phase would include attacks that cause the aggressor's ground force to culminate rapidly as a result of loss of operational logistical support and damage to the command and control structure. The goal would be to shatter the logistical, combat support and command and control links between forces in the field and the strategic infrastructure, as well as to disrupt the tempo of offensive operations. In the first phase, standoff, precision weapons would also be used to shape the battlefield (through the use of denial munitions) and then to start the destruction of tactical force. The second phase would focus on continued destruction of tactical forces and attacks on the aggressor's strategic logistic infrastructure and the national command and control system. The goal would be to widen the logistics and command and control deficit to prevent recovery of either. This holding action would continue until sufficient allied

ground and air power would be available to constitute an acceptable defense, prior to the start of offensive operations.

C. Required Firepower

The operational force available to an aggressor in a regional conflict is likely to include several thousand vehicles (tanks, trucks, armored personal carriers, combat support, etc.) It is reasonable to assume that a substantial portion of these vehicles must be damaged or destroyed during a holding campaign. The primary mobile target sets would include lead tactical element of the operational force and their combat and logistics support units. Follow-on strikes would attack second echelon units, not yet tactically deployed, and their support vehicles. Numerous fixed targets, including operational command and control nodes, key road and rail links, and forward logistics support areas would need to be struck initially to disrupt and stop the advance of the operational force. Once the fixed operational target set is destroyed, the emphasis would shift to a strategic target set to prevent recovery or coordinated response, and to contribute to the overall war efforts.

Detailed analysis would be required to determine the total number of strikes required to hold an aggressor. As a point of reference, in the first 24 hours of the Gulf War, approximately 200 targets were attacked by coalition aircraft and cruise missiles.⁹⁵ Approximately 42,000 air strikes were conducted during the Gulf War, with 15 percent targeted against the core strategic categories and 56 percent against Iraqi land forces.⁹⁶

At the start of the Gulf War air campaign, the strategic target list contained 295 targets and grew to 535 by the end of the war.⁹⁷ The total number of strikes required for the holding mission would be fewer, because setting the condition for a ground offensive and total victory would not be required. However, the rate at which targets must be struck (targets per day) would not necessarily be expected to go down and might in fact go up if the desired effects of stopping and holding an aggressor are to be achieved.

V. Naval Forces - Contribution and Limitations

Naval forces have traditionally lacked both the firepower and inland reach to engage a land power. The mission of forcible entry and the need to act as an enabling force in support of the safe introduction of land and air forces into theater, now requires naval forces to have the capability to project power ashore against land forces. The realization that this will require significantly more firepower than naval forces previously thought necessary for the sea control mission has created the incentive to increase battlegroup power projection capabilities dramatically. The advent of naval aviation in the 1920s, and the recent development of standoff precision weapons, such as the Tomahawk Land Attack Cruise Missile, have increased significantly the ability of naval forces to project striking power ashore. Newer aircraft, introduction of the proposed Arsenal Ship, improvements to the Tomahawk Weapons System and the development of air-launched standoff precision weapons will increase dramatically both the inland reach and firepower of naval forces operating in the littoral environment.

Not only must the holding force possess the required firepower, a high degree of force protection must be assured if its use is to be politically acceptable. Naval battlegroups are structured to provide defense in depth against air, surface and subsurface threats, and operations at sea provide an extra margin of distance from the battlefield. The force protection inherent in a multi-carrier battlegroup comes at the price of reduced offense capability, but this is being offset through the introduction of force enhancements for increased projection of power ashore. Also, regional powers simply do not possess the naval power to threaten U.S. forces at sea. Because naval forces would not have to be placed ashore and be directly threatened by an aggressor's invasion force, naval forces are politically much easier to deploy to a regional crisis, and then to use if required. Battlegroup force protection can be extended inland some distance to provide additional security or combat power for a U.S. regional ally or for arriving U.S. land and air forces as they become available at the end of the first MRC.

Naval forces would also be more likely to be available to perform the holding mission under a win-hold-win military strategy. Once naval forces have ensured the safe entry of U.S. forces into the first MRC, and have secured sea control, the majority of naval forces would be available to deploy to the follow-on MRC to accomplish the holding mission. Some naval forces would be still be required to support coalition forces and maintain sea control in the first MRC, but fewer forces would be required. The remaining naval forces could swing to the second MRC, and with additional naval forces surged from the U.S. bases, generate the required power projection capability to

stop and hold a regional aggressor. Moving naval forces from one region of the world to another would have far less of an impact on the air and the sea lift resources required for the first MRC, than moving comparable land or air forces.

The primary limitation of naval force is one of geography. A scenario is conceivable in which naval forces simply lack the inland reach, despite all planned force enhancements, to accomplish the holding mission. Additionally, naval forces require a minimum sailing time, measured in days, to respond to a crisis. The Navy's lack of an organic aerial tanker is a significant problem that has yet to be addressed in Navy force planning, and only exacerbates the problems associated with inland reach. It is worth noting that of the 200 targets struck on the first day of the Gulf War, only 38 were struck by the aircraft and cruise missiles from naval forces.⁹⁸ Naval forces were simply not prepared to make sufficient use of precision weapons in the quantities required by the air campaign. Increased inventories of precision weapons, modifications to existing aircraft, the introduction of stealth aircraft and acquisition of joint air-delivered standoff, precision weapons programs will overcome this problem, but only if the naval service remains committed to modernizing the force.

VI. Conclusions

Current defense spending is below that required to both maintain the force structure to execute the two MRC strategy, and modernize the force. Furthermore, additional cuts in defense spending are much more likely than the increases needed to

support the research and development and procurement as the U.S. moves into the twenty-first century. Further cuts in defense spending in support of balancing the U.S. budget and justified by a reduced threat because of the end of the cold war will likely result in a military force structure below that required to support the existing Two-MRC military.

Naval strategy and doctrine moved out of the Cold War thought process with the publishing of the white paper, *From the Sea*, in 1992. Recognizing the shift in national strategy to a regional focus, *From the Sea* committed the naval service to the support of land forces through littoral operations, and the missions of forward presence, crisis response, and power projection ashore. The commitment to the concepts described in *From the Sea* has been carried forward in both doctrine formulation and service acquisition programs.

In a regional conflict, it cannot be assumed that air and sea ports of debarkation for land and air forces arriving in theater will be uncontested. The capability to seize and hold ports of entry in a region, in order to execute the enabling mission, will require naval forces to fight in and dominate the littoral region. The holding mission in a win-hold-win national military strategy is a logical extension of the enabling mission, and is entirely consistent with the concepts and direction of current naval strategy. It is reasonable to assume that forces designed for the enabling mission could be leveraged, within acceptable cost limits, to successfully carry out the holding mission.

From the Sea also made a commitment to develop naval doctrine in support of the concepts expressed in the white paper and in fact there has been a virtual renaissance in naval doctrine development. The concept of battlespace dominance is a central theme of recent naval doctrine. While understandable in terms of naval forces operating in a maritime threat environment, it is far less intuitive how naval forces will dominate land warfare to secure ports and air fields. Naval doctrine must articulate a satisfactory concept for dealing with the land threat, recognizing that it is distinctly different and requires a different solution. Naval doctrine must provide unifying principals for the effective, focused use of naval power in land warfare in performing either the enabling mission or the holding mission.

Without question, there is an ongoing revolution in military affairs (RMA), with the Gulf War functioning as a signpost to the future, but not the final destination. Improvements in precision weapons and battlefield surveillance have dramatically improved the capabilities of military forces, but the U.S. must make changes to warfighting doctrine and organization to realize the full benefits of the RMA. A logical progression of the RMA process will result in an operational concept of disengaged combat for the employment of U.S. forces. Disengaged combat places a premium on the development of longer range systems and the force organizations designed to employ them, rather than forces designed and equipped for close combat. Proximity to the target would be less relevant in the successful application of firepower, and force protection would rely on distance from the threat, not heavily armored vehicles.

Naval forces bring a unique set of capabilities to a win-hold-win national military strategy. Naval forces can make a decisive contribution to the execution of the holding mission. Naval aviation, with an increased emphasis on the delivery of precision weapons and future standoff, precision weapons, and sea-launched land attack cruise missiles have dramatically increased both the inland reach and firepower available to engage land forces. Naval forces also offer the level of force protection necessary to allow a politically acceptable commitment of U.S. force through the fully integrated, multi-layer defensive architecture of carrier battlegroups. The anticipated force sequencing required to deal with an MRC strongly suggests that the forces available soonest to deal with a second MRC, with the least disruption to the first, will be naval forces. To stop and hold an aggressor, naval forces must focus on the disruption and destruction of mobile, tactical forces, as well as fixed operational and strategic targets.

The capability of U.S. military force to respond to two MRCs has been a central theme in recent years and is linked to U.S. defense treaties as well as the nations ability to successfully influence world event in support of U.S. foreign policy goal. Moving to a win-hold-win strategy and smaller force structure would still allow the U.S. to maintain the capability to respond to two MRCs, although at increased risk from both a military and foreign policy perspective. Supporting a smaller force structure could free up the funds required to ensure force modernization. While the world is certainly more unsettled than during the Cold War, the dangers to U.S. vital interest are significantly

lower now than in the past. Because "...bad times assuredly follow good. Rephrased, history is not a linear process in favor of progress...", now is the time to accept the risks associated with a smaller U.S. force structure.⁹⁹ Now is also the time to prepare for twenty-first century challenges through increased research and development and procurement to ensure that we meet future threats with a modernized force.

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⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁹ General Accounting Office, Bottom-Up Review: Analysis of Key DoD Assumptions (Washington DC: United States General Accounting Office, January 1995), 3.

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²³ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

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²⁶ Aspin, Bottom-Up Review, 29.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

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- ⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 21.
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- ⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.
- ⁹⁵ Deptula, Firing for Effect, 14.
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- ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 64.
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- ⁹⁹ Gray, The Navy in the Post-Cold War World, 194.

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