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THE NAVY'S ROLE IN NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

Mr. President, an evaluation of current national security strategy leads me to the conviction that our nation must rely increasingly upon naval forces to deter both strategic and conventional aggression. Sea-based forces provide reliable weapons systems to deter nuclear war and also provide the foundation for collective defense of the Free World.

The new foreign policy of the United States, the Nixon Doctrine, and its supporting national strategy of Realistic Deterrence places increased reliance on the United States Navy.

The underlying theme in the Nixon Doctrine, while recognizing the importance of Western Europe and the Atlantic Alliance to United States security interests, is a sharing of security burdens with allies, a strong but tailored U.S. force which is mobile and capable of application in a range of situations and types of response. It must be a force capable of countering Soviet military power and initiatives.

The logical military strategy consistent with our stated national interests, the threat posed by potential enemies, and the new approaches of the Nixon Doctrine is sea-based mobility -- mobility to shift our forces to where they may be needed, and to support them there so long as their presence is required. Therefore, the Navy must provide this mobility and the means to protect it.

As a maritime nation it is essential that our sea lines of communication be maintained to our sources of raw materials and to our allies, and that we are capable of controlling vital sea areas. This necessity to control the sea areas is the foundation of our ability to protect U.S. interests. It is in this area where the Soviet Union is now mounting a challenge, second only in danger to their challenge in strategic nuclear arms.

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There now exists a state of so-called "nuclear parity" or "nuclear balance" between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics but because that balance is tenuous in certain areas a dangerous and potentially fatal situation arises.

President Nixon on February 25, 1971, in his report to the Congress on U.S. Foreign Policy expressed it this way:

"The growth of Soviet power in the last several years could tempt Soviet leaders into bolder challenges. It could lead them to underestimate the risks of certain policies..."

We in this chamber, of course, have the responsibility and the opportunity to help dissuade the Soviet leaders from the temptation of making bold challenging risks with their military power.

We can see to it that the defense related bills which come before us do provide for a prudently sufficient defense posture. But our task is not easy.

NAVY PROGRAMS IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN NUCLEAR BALANCE
AND HEDGE IF ARMS LIMITING TALKS BREAKDOWN

For example, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) have again gotten underway and there will be the naturally hopeful inclination on the part of many to assume an early and successful outcome.

All of us wish a successful outcome to those negotiations but we must be realistic and not one of us knows at what date success might be achieved. It possibly could be in 12 months or, negotiations could continue for 12 years. Prudence dictates moreover that we recognize and hedge against even the possibility of a complete breakdown in the negotiations on arms limitation.

Some will ask how possibly can we hedge against such an eventuality and I say the immediate hedge is essentially provided for in the defense programs and defense-related programs as proposed by the Administration for Fiscal Year 1972.

It is not my purpose here to review those programs but rather to note that that hedge includes, among other things, the continuation of the program which eventually will convert 31 of our ballistic

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missile carrying submarines to Poseidon nuclear missile carriers. It is essential to the maintenance of the strategic nuclear balance that we carry forward the Poseidon program.

NAVAL CHALLENGE TO THE CONDUCT OF OUR FOREIGN RELATIONS

Under the Nixon Doctrine however there are several implications important for the Navy which lie beyond the maintenance of strategic nuclear balance.

The Nixon Doctrine also includes the concept of our own mobile conventional deterrent forces capable of maintaining an overseas presence, capable of projecting allied power into conflict areas, and capable of maintaining sea lanes of communication. And the Doctrine calls for effective military assistance to our allies.

But in the conduct of our foreign relations there is posed a relatively new threat. Soviet ships of war now sail all the oceans of the world, and in conjunction with modern fishing and merchant fleets, they make the presence of the USSR felt even in areas where formerly the United States Navy was without challenge. Today we are faced with an expanding Soviet Naval challenge which reaches not only to waters adjacent to our coasts but to the very coastlines themselves and, in fact, inland several hundred miles.

SEA LANES REQUIRED TO CARRY OUT TREATY ARRANGEMENTS

The deployment of military units overseas whether they be Army or Marine or Air Force units requires that sea lanes of communication be established for sustained support of those deployed forces. Despite the acquisition of transport aircraft of huge capacity the vast bulk of material support for overseas forces will be carried by sealift. In Vietnam, for example, I am told sealift accounted for over 95% of the resupply. Any decision, therefore to deploy friendly forces to an overseas area requires the assumption that we or our allies will control the sea lanes of communication.

We can see then that to carry out treaty arrangements and military goals under the Nixon Doctrine it is essential that we be capable of projecting military power, our own, or our allies or a combination

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of both. Projection forces include troop landings ashore from ships as well as carrier-based aircraft capable of striking hundreds of miles inland.

SEA LANES REQUIRED FOR NON-TREATY OBLIGATIONS

But also we must give consideration to situations in which our interests are involved even though we have no formal treaty arrangement. Such would be the case as with Israel where our national interests results not from a treaty but from common cultural and historic traditions. In such a case as during a so-called Mid East crisis our deterrent forces must be capable of carrying out their assigned missions without support from treaty allies.

For the accomplishment of those missions in the Mid East again we are dependent upon the use of sea lanes of communication. Secretary of Defense Laird expressed this latter point in his Defense Report of March 9, 1971 when he stated:

"...U.S. involvement in world affairs is not based exclusively on our alliances, but rather, our formal and informal obligations derive from and are shaped by our own national interests. To protect our interests, we must insure free use of international air space and free access to the world's oceans."

NAVAL PRESENCE HAS POLITICAL ROLE

I know of no plan which would permit us feasibly to withdraw completely all of our military forces from overseas but we are reducing the size of those forces and as we do so our Navy assumes greater political as well as military significance. In other words, the Navy is ideally suited for the mission of gaining political ends by displaying power in areas of U.S. national interest. Naval forces on station are visible reminders to our adversaries that our military units although reduced or removed can be returned swiftly.

CONCLUSION

Without a viable Navy there would be relatively few options open to the United States in the conduct of foreign policy. The Navy daily plays a role in maintaining the highly tenuous balance of power which is said to exist today. That situation stems from a

Soviet challenge which is based on nuclear weapons but also on Soviet "conventional" seapower.

Under the Nixon Doctrine, as United States forces are reduced and redeployed from overseas, we must depend increasingly upon our friends in the Free World to carry a larger share of defense and thus the use of sea lanes of communication is of increasing importance to us.

The requirement for an active forceful Navy it must be made clear to all Americans, rests on truly national considerations. These are not interests narrowly based on parochial considerations of geography or politics. We must make a concerted effort to make clear to Americans that if we do not provide our Navy with the kinds of warships and other equipment which can successfully counter the rapidly expanding Soviet naval threat the United States will not have a credible capability to conduct foreign relations and maintain the nation's security.