Tape Side A
Part 8-9

RICE VERSUS ZUMWALT ON PROJECT 60 kind of things

When one seeks to explain the nature of a modern naval conventional war, he's driven back to fundamentals. A naval confrontation either in the pure or as part of a larger conventional war on land between the United States and the Soviet Union requires one first to examine the geo-political circumstances. I've described elsewhere the nature of the United States as a world island and the Soviet Union as a land power. When one examines the problem that the U. S. would have, it's the problem of using the seas to keep its economy going and to be able to reinforce its own forces and its allies overseas. And the problem of the Soviet Union, as I have described elsewhere, is the problem of cutting those sealines. As the Soviet plans to do so it's looking at the world's oceans through a series of narrows in the main; that is, in order for the Soviet Union to get its forces to be brought to bear against us in the Atlantic, ships and submarines have to deploy out of bases in the Murmansk area and through the Greenland, Iceland-UK Gap into the broad open ocean area. Forces in the Black Sea have to

get through the Bosporus and Dardanelles to operate in the Mediterranean and through either the Suez or Gibraltar to operate in the Indian Ocean or the Atlantic. The Baltic Fleet has the tough problem of getting through the the Kattegatt and the Skagerrak. And even in the Pacific the Soviets operating out of Vladivostok have the problem of getting through the passages between the Kuril Islands, although they do have a base at Paramishiru on the end of the Kamchatka Peninsula which fronts on the open ocean. The Soviets therefore have the problem of either breaking through after the war begins or of surging to a relatively high deployment prior to the outbreak of the war, thereby giving us possible strategic warning or of just accepting the consequences of initiating war from a steady state deployment in trying to bring them the surge forces through the narrows after the war had begun. The Soviet's concept as we understand it from observing their fleet exercises is one of using their long range air to localize those forces which are not entrailed (that's land-based air) and to trail as many of our forces particularly those with high value ships in them like the aircraft carriers as is possible. They have, as I have described elsewhere, the concept of

keeping a surface ship constantly entrail of a carrier whenever its in an area other than the Continental United States, and frequently have submarines doing the same thing so that in a conventional first strike using their cruise missiles or rapid-fire guns or both from their surface ships and their cruise missiles and torpedoes from their submarines, they would be able to so damage our high-value ships that the contest would be much more in their favor. The United States in planning for its much tougher role of keeping the seas open seeks to take advantage of the geo-political factors that I have discussed. It is strategic considerations like this which has made it so imperative in the military view and supported by State to maintain strong alliances with the Straits' nations: Turkey, Greece, Spain, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and on the other side of the world Japan, Korea, the Philippines. And it explains why the loss of Egypt as a pro-western state into the Soviet camp for so many years was a significant strategic setback for us. The presence of U. S. forces in these nations able to operate from them would facilitate the exploitation of these narrows to try to attrite

Soviet forces. Aircraft flying out of these areas provide surveillance, surface ships operating out of them provide surveillance; both air and surface ships are able to attack the forces picked up. Submarines would be deployed in large numbers in wartime to barricade the major narrows with very heavy effort on the Greenland, Iceland-UK Gap, which will be the primary point of access into the Atlantic. There would be submarines carrying now the new Mark-48 torpedos, which is a very effective torpedo. It has a very long range and a very high probability of hit and it's the first torpedo that we've had in my Naval career which has been worth the expenditure of the vast number of dollars for the submarines. Heretofore, our submarines for which we spent a great deal of money have not had high capability to damage either other submarines or ships. The other way in which the narrows would be exploited is through mining them in those areas where the free world saw no need for access through, themselves and immediate, one/ logical effort would be, of course, to mine the Baltic and Black Sea straights. The development of the new captor mine which contains within it a Mark-46 torpedo that gets released as a submarine passes over it, makes it possible to aspire someday to mine the entire Greenland-Iceland-

UK Gap with a very high probability of success attriting submarines. (No, the Mark-46 torpedo has enough speed that it can overtake from behind, but it would normally be released as it first picked up the sensing as the ship was approaching. And because the Mark-46 torpedo has some appreciable running distance, a relatively small number of captor mines in comparison to the number of conventional mines would make it possible to seal off the North Sea. The acquisition of enough captor mines to seal off the North Sea would cost approximately the same as a nuclear submarine? So it's a very high payoff system. Because we haven't had a union responsible for it because we can't sit on it and command it, it has been a very difficult concept to put forward. This is in the process of being developed. My releasing device is in the process of being developed. They've been tested in mock-up form.

R. Can you quickly talk about what weapons' systems the Soviets might use to counter this kind of thing.

Z. The mines? The nature of the battle, which I started to describe a moment ago, would involve those Soviet forces which are in contact with ours, striking us and us seeking to repel and destroy them, and it would

involve the Soviets surging their remaining forces through the narrows.

R. Just on that subject, they could not do this without being detected?

Z. Could not do what?

R. Surge through the narrows.

Z. If instead of the normal, say one-third of the fleet is deployed, you saw the Soviets suddenly surging to where seven-eighths of it were deployed, you'd worry about whether they were doing just an exercise which they undoubtedly would call, or whether they were getting ready to strike something.

R. Could submarines successfully sneak through or would you know they were doing it?

Z. No. We would know that submarines were beginning to deploy in greater numbers, and so this would increase our readiness somewhat.

R. Can you talk at all about the kinds of things that detect submarines? ....bottom of the ocean, or on ships, or in airplanes .....

Z. Almost everything that the Navy has in the way of a fighting platform has the capability to detect submarines; our long-range patrol aircraft, our carrier-based ASW aircraft, our escort ships, some of our heavier ships,

helicopters with detection devices, and pershaps best of all our own submarines. In addition, we have other and more classified ways. Upon the outbreak of war, then, one could visualize the following: there would be a first conventional strike by the Soviets against those ships that were entrailed by their forces, and against all ships that were in reach of their land-based air.

R. The weapons those planes would fire would be missiles largely?

Z. By 1980, roughly, one-third of their submarines will be equipped with cruise missiles, all of them would have torpedoes; the long-range aircraft in the main would be firing air-to-surface cruise missiles, and the surface ships would certainly strike first with their cruise missiles and follow it up with rapid fire guns, if they were within range.

R. Bombs are no longer anything, right?

Z. Some of their aircraft which would not be equipped with cruise missiles, they would undoubtedly have fly out with bombs under the Russian theory of using everything they've got.

R. But the bomb is getting to be an obsolete weapon in Naval warfare?

Z. No. The bomb has had a kind of a second purchase on life as a result

of the fact that one now has both - I guess it's right to say that the bomb has become obsolete - but we do have a bomb-like devices which are kind of rocket assisted and which are television guided or have other forms of sensing equipment that can correct, in course, for the target.

R. But you don't have the kind of a situation that I, myself, personally witnessed in the second World War where a whole bunch of planes fly over a bunch of ships and drop things on top of them, and therefore are right up over the guns. It's a much more from-a-distance operation.

Z. That's right. The planes would normally release their hardware outside of anti-aircraft range and the anti-aircraft guns would now be used largely to try to shoot down the cruise missiles enroute to the target, and the air battle would take place betwen their long-range air and our fighter aircraft, hopefully outside the range of launch of cruise missiles. The major difference then between the air actions of World War II and the present air would be that in World War II after the air battles had taken place outside of strike range, the surviving enemy aircraft came through and tried to get close enough to drop their bombs. Nowadays, the surviving aircraft would be able to be still outside of range to -

still outside of anti-aircraft range - to get off their ordinance.

R. So anti-aircraft guns on ships at this point are getting to be a less important part of the .....?

Z. Yes. But we are now trying to develop a very high volume, rapid fire capability to deal with the cruise missiles, and our close-in weapons systems which would be kind of the modern equivalent of the old 40-millimeter guns of World War II, firing hundreds of small bullets, anyone of which could destroy a cruise missile. The Soviet job would be to try to coordinate air, surface and sub-surface attacks against our ships, using everything they had.

R. What kinds of surface ships would they use?

Z. They would use either destroyers or cruisers which had been trailing at the moment the battle began and they would make every effort to have one of theirs in contact with every one of ours, knowing that they could strike first and initiate the war. In my view, one of the questions for policy is whether when the United States has decided that it's going to have to take action, we shouldn't serve notice on the Soviets that we would consider it a hostile act if they get within trailing range so that

we can avoid the very great disadvantage of that Soviet first-strike. Now, at the same time that these battles are going on at the scene of our task forces..

R. Just one other thing; there's practically no visual contact at this point. When you say trailing, that doesn't mean within range of the naked eye or a telescope.

Z. No. The surface ships would be staying in close enough trail that they could get their cruise missiles off quickly and have a very short time of flight. They would probably air in favor of the minimum rather than the maximum range, just so their cruise missiles could get there faster and give us less warning to get our aircraft off.

R. In terms of miles, how does this out?

Z. Say two to eight miles.

R. Oh, it's that close. I was thinking in terms of 30 or 40.

Z. No. They do tend to keep their surface ships right, sometimes within the formation of our carrier task force.

R. That's embarassing, isn't it?

Z. It's an obscenity. And the cruise-missile firing submarines would probably be in the vicinity of the thirty-mile circle, so that they would

have a little more survivability. Now, at the same time that this battle is going on you would have the battle going on at the narrows with the free world forces trying to lay mines, the Soviets trying to knock off the mine-laying facilities with U. S. and free world submarines deploying..

R. Mines are laid by both planes and surface ships?

Z. That's right, and by aircrafts. And submarines can lay them, too. Although we don't have much capability there. The Soviets would be trying to destroy those vehicles that are carrying mines; the free world would be deploying submarines to those narrows where they could make a contribution, one of the primary ones being the Greenland area, the area North of the North Sea, but also in the Pacific off the Kuril Islands, lying in wait - which is their quietest mode - to pick up the Soviet submarines that are always noisier and which would suffer the disadvantage of making the speed that makes them noisier.

R. The faster it goes the noisier it is.

Z. That's right. And therefore the torpedoes would be fired at these Soviet submarines, both as they left to go into the open ocean and as they came back home for replenishment of torpedoes, food, etc. And there

would be a steady attrition at these narrows. There has always been a great deal of argument about what the percentage of attrition would be on each pass, and the outcomes of wars in a theoretical calculation are quite dependent on the attrition rate that one assumes for each pass. Those analysts who are looking for ways to cut the defense budget like to assume very high attrition rates, and those who believe in being objective use much lower attrition rates.

R. Do the Soviets have any places for replenishment that are not dependent on re-passing through the narrows?

Z. Yes, this is a very good professional question, Bob, and it's one that has occurred to the Soviets and they're working frantically to get other areas. This is one of the reasons why they have gone to such great lengths to get three separate base facilities in the Indian Ocean: the port of Um_____in Iraq, the ports of Aden in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and the port of Berbera in Samali. And it is, in my judgment, why they spent the money to build the base for the Indians at Visakhapetnam, on the East Coast of India. There is no doubt in my mind that they have a secret protocol with the Indians to permit them to use that base in wartime.

Similarily, the Soviets have worked very hard to get a permanent facility in Conakry, Guinea, and I added a little thing to the last part of the earlier chapter when the Soviets began the patrol there in 1970, which over a two-year period led them to gain a presence there. The Soviets, for the same reason, have been interested in developing Cuba, as we talked about earlier, and it's such a logical and desirable thing there from their standpoint - they had bases in Chile - that any Naval man would have been concerned about that prospect.

R. How do they go about keeping those bases full?

Z. What the Soviets would do is pre-stock the materials there. If they were able to avoid even a single pass through our barriers, they would be facilitative. The Soviets would also, in my judgment, use these stock-points to get surface ships to sea like the old German raiders to serve as replenishment ships to rendezvous in varying places with their submarines, because each free ride they can get not having to go through it - an attrition point - is a great gain for them.

R. Does the Soviet Navy have a large fleet of auxiliaries like the U. S. Navy does?

Z. The Soviets have a very large fleet of auxiliaries and since every one of