



Defence
Seen by W.C.M.
by Green

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

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Dear Clive,

The Defence Secretary asked me to send over to you without delay the attached text of a speech by the First Sea Lord to the Royal United Services Institute. It was not cleared with Mr Nott.

I have underlined in red the passages which Mr Nott named



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2BB

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like you to draw to the Prime
Minister's attention. I can
amplify this on the telephone.

Yours ever,

David Oswald

ASISAS.



With the Compliments

of

The Naval Assistant

to

The Chief of the Naval Staff
and
The First Sea Lord

RUSI LECTURE - 9 JUNE 1982

9 June

MR CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

SOME 2400 YEARS AGO THEMISTOCLES SAID "HE WHO CONTROLS THE SEA CONTROLS EVERYTHING". IN THE LAST 3 YEARS I HAVE SERVED TWO SECRETARIES OF STATE FOR DEFENCE AND NEITHER HAS BEEN A GREEK SCHOLAR.

YOU MIGHT REASONABLY SUPPOSE THAT THE VALUE AND USE OF MARITIME POWER FOR A COUNTRY SUCH AS OURS WITH ITS SEAFARING BACKGROUND AND GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION WOULD NEED NO EXPLANATION. I REGRET YOU WOULD BE WRONG - AS EVENTS OF THE PAST 18 MONTHS HAVE PROVED. MORE RECENTLY YOU MIGHT CONTEND THAT THE PRESENT CRISIS IS SERVING AS A STARK REMINDER OF THE REALITIES OF THE TRUTH. YOU WOULD BE RIGHT - BUT TO AN EXTENT WHICH REMAINS TO BE TRANSLATED INTO ACTION.

I INTEND TO DISCUSS THE MARITIME DEFENCE REQUIREMENT IN GENERAL. I SHALL TRY TO DO SO FROM WHAT I HOPE IS A RESPONSIBLE OVERALL DEFENCE VIEWPOINT AND NOT A NARROW, PAROCHIAL NAVAL ONE. I SHALL ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF WHETHER WE STILL NEED A STRONG NAVY AND MARITIME AIR CAPABILITY. AND I SHALL END WITH A PERSONAL VIEW ON THE FUTURE.

LET ME START WITH A FEW BGOs. FIRST, WE ARE AN ISLAND RACE, DEPENDENT ON OUR SEA LINES OF COMMUNICATION FOR MORE THAN 95% OF OUR TRADE, AND WITH OVER 600 MERCHANT SHIPS AT SEA ON ANY ONE DAY. OUR MERCHANT NAVY MAY OR MAY NOT PICK UP AGAIN AFTER THE PRESENT RECESSION ENDS BUT IT STILL CONTAINS 1,000 SHIPS OF OVER 1,000 TONS. OVER LONG YEARS WE HAVE DEVELOPED A SEAFARING EXPERTISE WHICH IS SECOND TO NONE AND INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED AS SUCH.

SECOND, THE DEFENCE OF THIS COUNTRY IS RIGHTLY BASED ON THE SUPPORT OF NATO - OF WHICH THE ATLANTIC IS BY DEFINITION AT ITS VERY HEART. IT MIGHT BE (BUT IT IS NOT) THE CENTRAL REGION TREATY ORGANISATION; IT IS THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION. IT IS THE ATLANTIC WHICH FORMS THE LINK BETWEEN THE TWO MAIN PARTNERS, WESTERN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA. THE STRENGTH OF THE ALLIANCE DEPENDS ON THE PARTNERSHIP OF THESE TWO POWER BLOCKS; ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER WOULD DESTROY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WHOLE. NORTH AMERICA WOULD SURVIVE ALONE BUT FEW WOULD SERIOUSLY DOUBT THE DEPENDENCE OF EUROPE ON THE USA. NOTHING WOULD PLEASE THE SOVIETS MORE THAN TO SEE AMERICA DECOUPLED. THEY CONTINUE TO WORK VIGOROUSLY TO THIS END AND ON OCCASION

SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRIES COME PERILOUSLY CLOSE TO DOING THEIR JOB FOR THEM.

THIRD, BECAUSE OF OUR GEOGRAPHY AND DEMONSTRATED MARITIME CAPABILITY THE UK IS ACCEPTED AS THE MARITIME LEADER OF NATO IN EUROPE. WITHOUT WISHING TO MAKE A PARTY POINT, WE PROVIDE 70% OF NATO'S EASTERN ATLANTIC READY FORCES AT A COST OF 23% OF THE UK DEFENCE BUDGET. THIS COMPARES WITH OUR PROVISION OF 10% OF THE ALLIED FORCES IN THE CENTRAL REGION FOR SOME 41% OF OUR DEFENCE BUDGET.

LET ME NOW LOOK AT SOME OF THE FUNDAMENTAL WIDER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD CONDITION THIS COUNTRY'S STRATEGY.

OTHER THAN RELIGIOUS WAR, VIRTUALLY ALL CONFLICTS OF HISTORY HAVE HAD AS THEIR BASIS A COMPETITIVE STRUGGLE TO GAIN CONTROL OF ECONOMIC RESOURCES WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE HOMELAND OF THE VICTOR TO ENJOY A HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING. THE SHORTHAND TERM FOR THIS IS IMPERIALISM. IN OUR ANXIETY TO ENSURE THE INTEGRITY OF THE NATO AREA THERE IS A DANGER OF MISUNDERSTANDING THIS UNDERLYING CAUSE OF CONFLICT BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND WESTERN COUNTRIES. SECURE BEHIND A STALEMATE POSITION ON THE CENTRAL FRONT - WHICH ENGAGES SO MUCH OF OUR RESOURCES AND

ENERGIES - WE RISK ADOPTING A MAGINOT LINE ATTITUDE AND PAY INSUFFICIENT ATTENTION TO OUR FLANKS.

BY FLANKS I DO NOT MEAN THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN FLANKS OF NATO, IMPORTANT AS THEY ARE, BUT THE WORLDWIDE ECONOMIC FLANK. THE COUNTRIES OF THE WEST ARE DEPENDENT NOT ONLY ON THE OIL RESERVES OF THE MIDDLE EAST - OVER HALF A BILLION TONS OF CRUDE OIL ARE IMPORTED INTO NATO EUROPE EACH YEAR - BUT ON IMPORTING OTHER SCARCE COMMODITIES: COPPER, TIN, CHROME, POTASH, MANGANESE, BAUXITE - TO NAME BUT A FEW CRITICAL RAW MATERIALS ON WHICH WE ARE NOWHERE NEAR SELF SUFFICIENT. AS WELL AS THE MIDDLE EAST, COUNTRIES AND CONTINENTS SUCH AS INDIA, SOUTH EAST ASIA, AFRICA, SOUTH AMERICA AND INDONESIA PROVIDE THE GEOGRAPHY OF THIS ECONOMIC FLANK. NONE OF THESE AREAS IS NOTABLE FOR ITS STABILITY AND ALL ARE VULNERABLE TO POLITICAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY PRESSURES. THE COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY IS BASED UPON THE CENTRALISATION OF THESE FOUR FACTORS AND BY THEIR COMBINED USE TO EXTEND THE CREED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AND THUS ENSURE THE IMPERIALIST WELL-BEING OF THE SOVIET UNION.

SO WHAT IS THE MORE LIKELY STRATEGY OF THE KREMLIN PLANNER?
NOT AN ATTACK ON THE CENTRAL FRONT WITH ALL THE ATTENDANT RISKS
OF NUCLEAR ESCALATION DESTROYING THE HOMELANDS OF BOTH RUSSIA
AND THE UNITED STATES - THE "BOTH LOSE" SCENARIO. NOR A MILITARY
ATTACK ON NATO'S SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN FLANKS, UNLESS THERE
SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT NATO DISUNITY OR LACK OF WILL TO MAKE IT
POSSIBLE TO PICK THESE PLUMS WITHOUT RISKING A MAJOR CONFLICT.
FAR BETTER A STRATEGY BASED ON PEACEFUL EXPLOITATION BACKED BY
MILITARY STRENGTH TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE ECONOMIC RESOURCES ON
WHICH THE WEST RELIES, YET WHICH ARE GEOGRAPHICALLY SITUATED
OUTSIDE THE DEFENSIVE CIRCLE AROUND THE NATO AREA.

FACED WITH A STRONG ALLIANCE IN EUROPE, THE HARD CONTINENTAL
NATO BOUNDARIES, THE SOVIETS ARE TRYING TO OUTFLANK IT BY PROBING
THE SOFT AND ILL-DEFINED MARITIME BOUNDARIES AROUND THE REST OF
THE WORLD. IT WAS LENIN - OR BENN OR SOME SUCH - WHO SAID "PROBE
WITH BAYONETS; IF YOU FIND MUSH - PROCEED; IF YOU ENCOUNTER
STEEL - WITHDRAW".

IN PURSUING SUCH A STRATEGY, THE SOVIETS HAVE SUFFERED
SOME EXPENSIVE REBUFFS, FOR EXAMPLE EGYPT. BUT THEY HAVE
REMORSELESSLY PRESSED ON, CONTINUING TO LEARN FROM THEIR

MISTAKES (FOR EXAMPLE THE CUBAN CRISIS IN 1962) AS THEY TURN TO MORE LONG TERM AND SAFER METHODS OF ACHIEVING THEIR AIM. THIS IS WHAT LIES BEHIND THE SUPPORT GIVEN TO ADMIRAL GORSHKOV IN BUILDING UP RUSSIA AS A MAJOR MARITIME POWER, A POLICY WHICH IS EXPENSIVE YET WHICH IS CLEARLY SEEN AS AN ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENT.

THE SHIPS, SUBMARINES AND AIRCRAFT NEEDED TO PROJECT MARITIME POWER TAKE TIME TO DEVELOP AND DEPLOY BUT THE SOVIETS HAVE MADE GREAT STRIDES OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS. WE ARE NOW FACING AN ACCELERATION OF THE BUILD UP OF THEIR ALREADY POWERFUL SOVIET FLEET. IT IS NOT MY PURPOSE TODAY TO GIVE YOU A DETAILED EXPOSITION ON SOVIET MARITIME CAPABILITIES: BUT TO ILLUSTRATE MY THEME:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| AHEAD IN SUBMARINES | 1 NUCLEAR EVERY 6 WEEKS |
| ALFA CLASS | FASTER/DEEPER |
| OSCAR CLASS | ONLY SLIGHTLY SMALLER THAN INVINCIBLE - 24 SSN19 WITH A RANGE OF 500 KM. |
| TYPHOON | THE SIZE OF HERMES - BN - BATTLESHIP S/M |
| 4 CLASSES CC/DD | 1 28K BATTLE CRUISER, NUCLEAR POWERED |
| CVSs | CVA |
| SNAF | BACKFIRE |
| CAPABILITY | DEFENCE OF HOMELAND/THROUGH SEA DENIAL/TO SEA CONTROL |

OVERALL WE SEE A REASONABLY BALANCED FLEET WITH MODERN AND HEAVILY ARMED SHIPS AND SUBMARINES; THERE ARE SHORTCOMINGS IN AFLOAT SUPPORT AND ORGANIC FIXED WING AIR BUT THESE ARE BEING REMEDIED. IN THE AIR, THEY POSSESS A LARGE SHORE-BASED LONG RANGE NAVAL AIR FORCE AND ARE WELL ADVANCED IN THE USE OF SATELLITES.

THEY ALSO NOW HAVE BY FAR THE BIGGEST FISHING FLEET IN THE WORLD, A LARGE NUMBER OF OCEANOGRAPHIC AND RESEARCH SHIPS, AND THE FIFTH LARGEST MERCHANT FLEET WHICH IS STILL CLIMBING THE LEAGUE TABLE; THERE ARE CLEAR SIGNS OF UNDERCUTTING FREIGHT RATES WHICH IS A WAY OF USING ECONOMIC MEANS TO GAIN A MONOPOLY CONTROL OF CERTAIN TRADE ROUTES - THE CLASSICAL TACTICS OF MARITIME POWERS THROUGHOUT HISTORY. THESE THREE FLEETS (AS WELL AS THE NAVY PROPER) ARE ALL UNDER CENTRAL, NATIONAL CONTROL; GORSHKOV CALLS THEM HIS FOUR FLEETS; TOGETHER WITH THE NAVAL AIR FORCE THEY FORM THE MARITIME STRENGTH OF THE SOVIET UNION.

WHAT IS IT ALL FOR? NOT JUST DEFENCE OF THE HOMELAND. NOR CAN IT BE BECAUSE OF RUSSIA'S DEPENDENCE ON SEA TRADE AND SEA LINES OF COMMUNICATION; UNLIKE WESTERN EUROPE, SHIPPING IS AN ECONOMIC CONVENIENCE, NOT VITAL TO RUSSIA'S SURVIVAL. SHE

ENJOYS INTERIOR LINES OF COMMUNICATION FOR FOOD AND OIL AND WHAT SHE GETS BY SEA COULD BE REPLACED; HER NATURAL WEALTH IS SUCH THAT SHE HAS NO ABSOLUTE NEED TO SECURE RAW MATERIAL RESERVES OVERSEAS.

THE SOVIETS SEE THEIR MARITIME POWER AS AN IDEAL TOOL FOR FURTHERING THEIR FUNDAMENTAL AIM OF ACHIEVING WORLD DOMINATION AND ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE.

OUR RIGID NATO BOUNDARY IS RELEVANT FOR ONLY ONE REASON: THAT RELATING TO ARTICLE 5 OF THE TREATY, "AN ATTACK ON ONE IS AN ATTACK ON ALL." IN ALL OTHER RESPECTS THE CONFLICT BETWEEN NATO AND THE WARSAW PACT NEEDS TO BE CONSIDERED IN GLOBAL TERMS, NOT ONLY IN WAR, BUT ALSO IN TENSION AND PEACE - AND IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT THE PRESENCE AND FLEXIBILITY OF MARITIME POWER COMES INTO ITS OWN.

NOW YOU MIGHT SAY THAT IS ALL VERY WELL. NO ONE WOULD DISAGREE WITH WHAT YOU HAVE JUST SAID BUT WE MUST LOOK AT WHAT THE UK CAN AFFORD AND WHAT IT CAN CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS DEFENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NATO ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE, AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE MARITIME BALANCE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST COMPARED TO THE CONTINENTAL IMBALANCE, PARTICULARLY ON THE CENTRAL FRONT AND NORTHERN FLANK.

TO TAKE THESE POINTS, STARTING WITH THE MARITIME BALANCE. WHEN COMPARING THE NUMBERS OF HULLS ON EACH SIDE, THE WEST STILL HAS NUMERICAL SUPERIORITY IN SURFACE FORCES BUT THE UNDERLYING TRENDS SHOW OUR NUMBERS TO BE REDUCING WHILST THOSE OF THE SOVIET NAVY ARE INCREASING. A YEAR AGO SACLANT ASSESSED THAT ON PRESENT TRENDS THE BALANCE WILL TIP TOWARDS THE WARSAW PACT BY THE MID 80s. MATTERS HAVE HARDLY IMPROVED IN OUR FAVOUR SINCE THEN AND SOME WOULD ARGUE THAT IT ALREADY HAS. AND ONE MUST REMEMBER THAT IT TAKES SOME 10 YEARS TO PRODUCE A NEW MAJOR WEAPON SYSTEM OR A SHIP. FURTHERMORE, ALTHOUGH TOTTING UP NUMBERS USED TO BE A STRAIGHTFORWARD WAY OF PRESENTING THE RELATIVE STRENGTHS WHEN LIKE WAS BEING COMPARED WITH LIKE AND THE MARITIME PROBLEM WAS COMPARATIVELY SIMPLE, THE TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES OF THIS CENTURY HAVE CHANGED THE NATURE OF WAR AT SEA BEYOND RECOGNITION.

FOR EXAMPLE, AT THE START OF WORLD WAR TWO, ON A STRAIGHT NUMERICAL COMPARISON, GERMANY WAS HEAVILY OUTNUMBERED AT SEA BY AT LEAST FOUR TO ONE. YET, BY POSSESSING A RELATIVE HANDFUL OF SURFACE SHIPS AND SOME 50 DIESEL ENGINED SUBMARINES WHICH HAD TO

I NOW TURN TO THE SIZE OF THE UK MARITIME CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATO ALLIANCE. AT ONE EXTREME WE COULD JUST CONCENTRATE ON DEFENCE OF THE UK BASE, MAINLY IN THE FORM OF MINE COUNTERMEASURES, OFFSHORE AND FISHERY PROTECTION, AND PERHAPS SOME CONTRIBUTION TO THE ASW BATTLE IN THE EASTERN ATLANTIC, AND LEAVE THE REST TO THE AMERICANS; AFTER ALL THEY ARE THE ONLY NAVY STILL ABLE TO OPERATE LARGE STRIKE CARRIERS. BUT THE US NAVY IS ITSELF FORCE POOR. PRESIDENT REAGAN HAS REVERSED HIS PREDECESSOR'S DECISION AND GIVEN APPROVAL TO BUILD MORE NUCLEAR POWERED CARRIERS, BUT THEY COULD BE THE LAST. CNO HAS SAID THAT AT PRESENT THEY ARE TRYING TO MEET A 3 OCEAN REQUIREMENT WITH A 1½ OCEAN NAVY AND THERE IS A REAL NEED FOR OTHER NATO NAVIES TO PLUG THE GAPS. THE ONLY OTHER NATO NAVY THAT MIGHT DO MORE IS THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY WHICH HAS RECENTLY EXTENDED ITS OPERATING BOUNDARY UP TO THE NORWEGIAN SEA. BUT DOES IT MAKE SENSE FOR THE GERMANS WITH THEIR LIMITED COASTLINE TO BUILD UP THEIR NAVY AND TAKE ON A GREATER EASTLANT ROLE SO THAT WE IN THIS COUNTRY CAN REDUCE THE SIZE OF OUR NAVY AND MAKE SAVINGS TO BUILD UP OUR FORCES IN GERMAN HOMELAND - PARTICULARLY NOW THAT THE OFFSET AGREEMENT HAS ENDED?

SURELY THE SENSIBLE AND COST EFFECTIVE THING FOR NATO TO DO IS TO BUILD ON WHAT ALREADY EXISTS: FOR COUNTRIES SUCH AS WEST GERMANY WITH THEIR CONTINENTAL EXPERTISE AND GEOGRAPHY TO CONCENTRATE ON THE CENTRAL FRONT - AFTER ALL IT IS THEIR OWN SOIL - AND FOR THE UK WITH ITS MARITIME EDGE TO MAINTAIN ITS LEAD AT SEA.

GEOGRAPHICALLY BRITAIN IS IDEALLY PLACED, ADJACENT TO THE GRIUK GAP, THROUGH WHICH THE SOVIET MAIN NAVAL FORCES HAVE TO DEPLOY TO REACH THE ATLANTIC. IN THE EARLY STAGES OF A WAR, ESPECIALLY IF THERE HAD BEEN LITTLE WARNING, UK MARITIME FORCES WOULD HAVE TO BEAR THE BRUNT OF OPERATIONS IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC. HERE WE CAN PROVIDE DEFENCE IN DEPTH AGAINST THE MARITIME THREAT, AND SUPPORT THE NORTHERN FLANK OF NORWAY, BOTH CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESSFUL CONDUCT OF MARITIME OPERATIONS IN THE ATLANTIC. MILITARILY LOSS OF THE NORTHERN FLANK WOULD BE VERY SERIOUS INDEED: THE THREAT AGAINST ALLIED SHIPPING WOULD BE GREATLY MAGNIFIED BY THE ENEMY'S ACQUISITION OF FORWARD SEA AND AIR OPERATING BASES; CONTROL OF THE NORTH SEA WOULD BE IN JEOPARDY; AND THE DIRECT THREAT TO THE UK BASE INCREASED.

LAST BUT BY NO MEANS LEAST A WORD ABOUT THE PROTECTION OF REINFORCEMENT AND RESUPPLY SHIPPING FOR ACE. EVEN IF ALL THE

SPEND MUCH OF THEIR TIME ON THE SURFACE, SHE WAS ABLE TO MAKE AN ALMOST SUCCESSFUL CHALLENGE TO OUR CONTROL OF VITAL SEA LANES. COMPARE THIS WITH THE SOVIET NAVY TODAY WITH OVER 400 SUBMARINES, MANY OF WHICH ARE NUCLEAR PROPELLED WITH VASTLY SUPERIOR UNDER-WATER SPEED, AND OPERATIONAL ENDURANCE LIMITED ONLY BY THE HUMAN FACTOR. IT IS THE EVER GROWING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN THE OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY OF THE SOVIET NAVY WHICH IS OUR MAJOR CONCERN AND WHICH MAKES A NONSENSE OF ANY STRAIGHT COMPARISON OF TOTAL NUMBERS.

AGAIN I BELIEVE PEOPLE ARE SOMETIMES MISLED BY THE ACCEPTED PRINCIPLE THAT, ON LAND, TO TAKE THE OFFENSIVE YOU NEED A SUPERIORITY OF ABOUT 3 TO 1. BUT AT SEA, THE OPPOSITE APPLIES AND IT IS THE DEFENCE THAT REQUIRES THE NUMERICAL ADVANTAGE, PARTICULARLY FOR ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE IN WHICH A MIX DRAWN FROM MPA, ORGANIC HELICOPTERS, SURFACE SHIPS AND SUBMARINES IS NEEDED FOR SUCCESS AGAINST A SINGLE NUCLEAR SUBMARINE. AT ONE TIME IN 1943 THOSE 50 GERMAN SUBMARINES WERE BEING OPPOSED BY SOMETHING IN THE ORDER OF 25 CARRIER TYPES, 800 ESCORTS AND 1100 MARITIME AIRCRAFT. THE WEST CANNOT TAKE COMFORT IN PARITY, BUT NEEDS A SUBSTANTIAL SUPERIORITY TO DEFEND OUR INTEREST AT SEA, LET ALONE CARRY THE OFFENSIVE TO THE ENEMY.

CURRENTLY ENVISAGED PREPOSITIONING IS ACHIEVED, 90% RE/RE WILL STILL BE SEABORNE. THIS IS A HUGE TASK INVOLVING SOMETHING IN THE ORDER OF 1 MILLION MEN, 11 MILLION TONS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND 17 MILLION TONS OF POL; IT WILL NEED THE SUPPORT OF ALL NATO BLUE WATER NAVIES AND IS ESSENTIAL IF WAR ON THE CONTINENT IS TO BE SUSTAINED. HERE WE COULD ENTER THE ARGUMENT OF SHORT VERSUS LONG WAR. THERE ARE THOSE IN THIS COUNTRY WHO FIND IT CONVENIENT TO SUPPORT THE SHORT WAR SCENARIO BUT IT IS A VIEW VIGOROUSLY REFUTED BY OUR AMERICAN ALLIES AND NOT ACCEPTED IN NATO. IN HIS ANNUAL REPORT EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE US SECRETARY OF DEFENCE POINTS OUT THE FALLACY OF THE - QUOTE - "SHORT WAR ASSUMPTION - THE NOTION THAT IN PLANNING OUR STRATEGY AND DESIGNING OUR FORCES WE COULD RELY ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT A CONVENTIONAL WAR WOULD BE OF SHORT DURATION. COMMON SENSE" HE SAID "AND PAST EXPERIENCE TELL US OTHERWISE".

ANY STRATEGY WHICH WEAKENS NATO CAPABILITY TO REINFORCE ACROSS THE ATLANTIC WILL INEVITABLY LOWER THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD, AND UNLESS A VIABLE REINFORCEMENT CAPABILITY IS DESCERNIBLY MAINTAINED THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT FORWARD-DEPLOY FORCES, ESPECIALLY GROUND FORCES, TO MAINLAND EUROPE. DECOUPLING OF THE

US IS A PRIME SOVIET AIM. WE MUST KEEP OPTIONS OPEN AND AVOID COMMITTING OURSELVES TO AN ASSUMPTION WHICH, IF PROVED FALSE, WOULD BE DISASTROUS. IN 1914 AND AGAIN IN 1939, NO ONE THOUGHT THE WAR WOULD LAST LONGER THAN 6 MONTHS; LOOK WHAT HAPPENED.

SO I SEE PROTECTION OF THE REINFORCEMENT ROUTES IN TENSION AND WAR AS FUNDAMENTAL TO NATO'S DETERRENT POSTURE AND AN IMPORTANT (THOUGH NOT THE PRIME) COMMITMENT FOR MARITIME FORCES. ALL THREE MNCs ARE AGREED THAT NATO DOES NOT HAVE A VIABLE STRATEGY IN EUROPE WITHOUT THE ASSURANCE OF REINFORCEMENT AND RESUPPLY, AND THIS CAPABILITY IS THE PRINCIPAL INSURANCE OF US COMMITMENT TO EUROPEAN DEFENCE.

AGAINST THIS BACKCLOTH OF WHY I BELIEVE WE NEED STRONG MARITIME FORCES, I TURN NOW TO THE FUTURE - COMMENCING WITH THE OUTCOME OF LAST YEAR'S DEFENCE REVIEW. THE INFORMED RECOGNISE THAT IT WAS DONE IN A HURRY, INVOLVED PRE-JUDGEMENT, AND WAS DRIVEN BY SHORT TERM POLITICO-ECONOMIC EXPEDIENCY RATHER THAN LONG TERM STRATEGIC SENSE.

THE EFFECT ON THE ROYAL NAVY WAS DRAMATIC COMING AS IT DID SO SOON AFTER THE CUTS IMPOSED DURING THE 1980 MINI DEFENCE REVIEW. IN ADDITION TO BEING SADDLED WITH VIRTUALLY THE WHOLE OF THE BILL FOR TRIDENT (FOR WHICH PROJECT, EN PASSANT, I AM AN

SEVERAL BILLION

UNEQUIVOCAL SUPPORTER), CUTS OF ~~£~~ WERE APPLIED TO THE
NAVAL PROGRAMME OVER THE NEXT 9 YEARS. TO PUT IT IN PERSPECTIVE
THESE AMOUNTED TO MORE THAN TWICE THE CUTS APPLIED TO THE
ARMY AND OVER SEVEN TIMES THOSE APPLIED TO THE ROYAL AIR FORCE,
ON TOP OF SUBSTANTIAL AND UNBALANCED REDUCTIONS THE PREVIOUS
YEAR. OUR OVERALL MILITARY BALANCE WILL BE CONSEQUENTLY IMPAIRED
AND OUR FLEXIBILITY TO MEET THE UNFORESEEN ERODED. I PUT IT TO
YOU THAT A GOOD DEAL OF THE FUTURE IS, AND IS LIKELY TO REMAIN,
UNFORESEEN. FORECASTS ARE NECESSARILY ASSUMPTION-BASED AND
ARE OFTEN PROVED WRONG. WE REALLY SHOULD HAVE LEARNT THIS LESSON
BY NOW. THE COD WAR, BEIRA PATROL, THE GULF OF OMAN REQUIREMENT
AND NOW THE FALKLAND ISLANDS CRISIS ARE ALL EXAMPLES OF OPERATIONS
WHICH AROSE AT SHORT NOTICE AND WITH LITTLE OR NO WARNING. THEY
DEMONSTRATE TYPICALLY THE FLEXIBILITY OF MARITIME POWER - BY
ITS PRESENCE AND THE WIDE RANGE OF OPTIONS IT CAN OFFER IN
SUPPORT OF OUR DIPLOMACY. THERE IS ONE OTHER MATTER OF
PRINCIPLE WHICH MERITS A MENTION BEFORE I SUMMARISE HOW THE NAVY
HANDLED THIS SITUATION. IT IS QUITE SIMPLY THAT ONCE A MAJOR
CAPABILITY IS GIVEN UP, AND THE ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIAL BASE LOST,
IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO RECOVER. HERE AGAIN SHORT TERM
EXPEDIENCY CAN WREAK HAVOC.

YOU WILL BE FAMILIAR WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S MAIN DECISIONS CONCERNING MY SERVICE AND I WILL REHEARSE THEM ONLY BRIEFLY. MID-LIFE MODERNISATION OF DESTROYERS AND FRIGATES ARE TO BE ABANDONED; A LARGE NUMBER OF SHIPS ARE BEING DISPOSED OF BEFORE THEIR TIME; THE NEW CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME FOR DESTROYERS AND FRIGATES IS TO BE SHARPLY CURTAILED IN FAVOUR OF A NEW SMALLER, CHEAPER CLASS; THE SUBMARINE AND MINECOUNTER-MEASURES PROGRAMMES ARE TO BE BROADLY MAINTAINED ALBEIT WITH SOME REDUCTIONS; CERTAIN DOCKYARDS AND SUPPORT DEPOTS ARE TO BE CLOSED; SOME 8-10,000 OFFICERS AND MEN ARE TO BE REDUCED BY 1986 WITH A FURTHER, SIMILAR NUMBER IN THE LAST HALF OF THE COSTING PERIOD; REDUCTIONS IN CIVILIANS ARE ALSO TO BE MADE.

FACED WITH THESE PARAMETERS THE NAVY HAD FEW OPTIONS. THE AIM SET BY THE ADMIRALTY BOARD WAS THE RETENTION OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE FLEET WE COULD AFFORD. LITTLE MORE COULD BE DONE IN THE FIELDS OF SUPPORT OR MANPOWER. THE CHOICE THUS EFFECTIVELY NARROWED TO THE TRAINING SECTOR: IF A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF OUR TRAINING, HITHERTO (AND FOR GOOD REASONS) CONDUCTED ASHORE, COULD BE TRANSFERRED TO SHIPS OF THE FLEET IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO CLOSE A NUMBER OF SHORE ESTABLISHMENTS

AND MAKE CONSEQUENTIAL FINANCIAL SAVINGS.

SUCH DECISIONS ARE NOT WITHOUT PENALTIES. ABANDONMENT OF MID-LIFE MODERNISATIONS WILL INCREASE A SHIP'S SEAGOING AVAILABILITY BUT AT THE EXPENSE OF PROGRESSIVE OBSOLESCENCE. PERIODIC WEAPON SYSTEM UPDATING IS FUNDAMENTAL TO EFFECTIVE COUNTERING OF THE THREAT AND PROVISION FOR IT, WHETHER MORE OR LESS COST EFFECTIVE THAN THE CRITICISED MODERNISATIONS, WILL HAVE TO BE MADE, AND SHIFTING A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THE TRAINING LOAD TO SEA WILL SAVE ON SHORE TRAINING COSTS BUT WILL REDUCE THE TIME SHIPS ARE AT THEIR FULL OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY.

THAT, IN BROAD TERMS, WAS THE POSITION REACHED BY EASTER THIS YEAR. THEN CAME THE FALKLAND ISLANDS CRISIS. I WILL NOT DWELL ON THE INTELLIGENCE OF THIS EVENT NOR ON THE ASSESSMENT OF IT ON YET ONE MORE OF THE MANY BLOW HOT/BLOW COLD OCCASIONS RELATING TO THESE ISLANDS OVER THE PAST 17 YEARS. BUT NOW THE WORST HAD ACTUALLY HAPPENED AND THE QUICKEST POSSIBLE REACTION WAS REQUIRED. I WILL MAKE TWO COMMENTS ONLY: FIRST, AS A PROFESSIONAL SAILOR I AM PROUD OF THE RESPONSE; AND SECOND, I DOUBT THAT AT ANY TIME IN HISTORY AN OPERATION OF THIS MAGNITUDE HAS BEEN CONDUCTED IN THE ONSET OF AN ANTARCTIC

WINTER FROM A BASE 8,000 MILES AWAY. THERE MAY BE A DISASTER TOMORROW - THERE CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN LOSSES AND MAY BE MORE - BUT THERE CAN BE FEW MORE CONVINCING DEMONSTRATIONS OF THE FLEXIBILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF SEAPOWER. NOTHING ELSE COULD HAVE DONE THE JOB. THE VERY SAME FORCES APPROPRIATE TO PEACETIME PRESENCE WORLDWIDE AND THE EXERCISE OF DETERRENCE WITHIN THE NATO AREA WERE NOW TO BE PUT TO THE TEST OF WAR OUTSIDE IT.

FORTUITOUSLY THE CRISIS OCCURRED BEFORE THE CUTS IN THE NAVY'S FRONT LINE CAPABILITY WERE TOO FAR DOWN THE ROAD. AND THIS BRINGS ME TO A VERY UNSAVOURY ASPECT. NOTHING WOULD HAVE BEEN EASIER THAN TO HAVE MADE CHEAP MILEAGE OF THE NEED TO TAKE UP SUCH A QUANTITY AND VARIETY OF SHIPS FROM TRADE ON GROUNDS OF THE IRRESPONSIBLE RUNDOWN OF THE NAVY. THIS WAS NOT DONE - NOT LEAST BECAUSE THERE WERE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO ATTEND TO. BUT AT THE HEIGHT OF THE CRISIS A PARTY POLITICAL HANDOUT WAS PRINTED AND CIRCULATED TO MPs. BY DINT OF SELECTIVE QUOTATION IT SOUGHT TO SHOW THAT THE DOUBTS INCREASINGLY BEING VOICED WERE GROUNDLESS AND THAT LAST YEAR'S DEFENCE REVIEW HAD GIVEN THE NAVY MORE MONEY AND BETTER CAPABILITY AND SO ON. THE HANDLING OF THIS WAS NOT WITHOUT RESEMBLANCE TO THAT OF THE

DEFENCE REVIEW ITSELF: IT WAS A MAJOR CON-TRICK OR, NOT TO
PUT TOO FINE A POINT ON IT, A CATALOGUE OF HALF
TRUTHS.

HERE ARE THE WHOLE-TRUTH FACTS OF CURRENT PLANS. THE ASW
CARRIERS ARE TO BE REDUCED BY A THIRD AS ARE THEIR ORGANIC SEA
HARRIER CAPABILITY. THE DESTROYER/FRIGATE FORCE IS TO BE REDUCED
FROM 65 TO 42 OPERATIONAL PLUS 8 IN RESERVE AND THERE WILL BE A
CONSEQUENTIAL 20% DECREASE IN THE OVERALL AVAILABILITY OF THESE
SHIPS. THE PREVIOUSLY PLANNED TOTAL OF SSNs WILL DROP BY 3. OUT
OF THE 27 MAJOR WARSHIPS AND SUBMARINES THAT HAVE ENTERED OR
ARE ENTERING SERVICE BETWEEN APRIL 1979 AND 1987 (WHICH IS WHEN
THE LAST CURRENTLY ORDERED ENTERS SERVICE) ONLY 4 HAVE BEEN
ORDERED BY THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT ACHIEVING AN AVERAGE EXPENDI-
TURE OF £300M PER YEAR ON NEW SHIPS COMPARED TO £600M PER YEAR
DURING THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION. ~~SEVERAL~~ *FURTHERMORE A LARGE NUMBER OF EXISTING* SHIPS ARE TO BE
PAID OFF EARLIER THAN PLANNED ~~TOTALLING OVER 300 SHIPS YEARS.~~

TWO ABSURDITIES IN PARTICULAR STAND OUT FROM THE FALKLAND
ISLANDS OPERATION SO FAR. FIRST, THE PROJECTED SALE OF
INVINCIBLE AT A KNOCKDOWN PRICE TO A FRIENDLY COMMONWEALTH
COUNTRY THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD. WITHOUT INVINCIBLE THE

PRESENT OPERATION WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE; AND WITH THE CHANGE OF AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDE COUPLED WITH THEIR PRIME MINISTER'S ASSURANCE THAT WE NEED FEEL UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO PROCEED WITH THE SALE IT IS SURELY INCONCEIVABLE THAT WE SHALL DO SO. INDEED REMARKABLE EFFORTS ARE ALREADY BEING MADE TO ACCELERATE THE COMPLETION OF ILLUSTRIOUS SO AS TO PROVIDE A MUCH NEEDED THIRD DECK.

SECOND, THE WEAPON SYSTEM TO COME UNDER MOST CRITICISM IS SEA DART. ITS PERFORMANCE IN ACTION HAS BEEN ENTIRELY AS EXPECTED. THE PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS TO CORRECT ITS KNOWN SHORTCOMINGS WERE CANCELLED AS PART OF THE CUTS.

SO HOW LIES THE FUTURE FOR THE NAVY? THE ROLES AND TASKS WILL REMAIN ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED. WE WILL CONTINUE TO BEAR THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BEING THE LEADING MARITIME POWER IN EUROPE AND THE LARGEST NAVY AFTER THE SUPER POWERS. OUR PRIMARY TASK, WITH OUR ALLIES, IS TO DETER; THAT IS TO MAINTAIN PEACE BY PREVENTING WAR. BUT SHOULD THIS FAIL WE MUST THEN, AGAIN WITH OUR ALLIES, WIN THE WAR. EFFECTIVE DETERRENCE INVOLVES MAINTAINING A HIGH STATE OF READINESS, BEING WELL EQUIPPED AND TRAINED, AND OPERATING AND DEPLOYING WHEREVER AND WHENEVER THE SITUATION DEMANDS. IT MEANS MAKING CLEAR TO ANY POTENTIAL ENEMY

THAT ESCALATION TO CONFLICT WOULD CARRY TOO GREAT A RISK TO MAKE IT WORTHWHILE FOR HIM. THE ROYAL NAVY AND THE ROYAL MARINES WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE UNIQUE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MAINTAINING PEACE AND STABILITY: BY BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BRITISH STRATEGIC NUCLEAR DETERRENT FORCE; BY DEPLOYING SHIPS AND MEN BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE NATO AREA AS REQUIRED; BY BEING READY TO COUNTER SOVIET NAVAL DISPOSITIONS THROUGH SURVEILLANCE OPERATIONS AT SHORT NOTICE; AND, AT THE LOWER END OF THE SPECTRUM, BY ROUTINE PATROLS TO PROTECT OUR OFFSHORE RESOURCES AND OTHER INTERESTS.

IN TENSION OR WAR WE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO THE ALLIANCE'S OVERALL MARITIME EFFORT. AFTER THE STRATEGIC DETERRENT THE MOST IMPORTANT TASKS FOR THE ROYAL NAVY WOULD BE TO PROVIDE ASW SUPPORT FOR THE US CARRIER BATTLE GROUPS IN THE NATO STRIKING FLEET ATLANTIC AND TO CONTRIBUTE BOTH DIRECTLY AND THROUGH FORWARD OPERATIONS TO THE PROTECTION OF THE HUGE AMOUNT OF REINFORCEMENT AND RESUPPLY SHIPPING WHICH WOULD CROSS FROM THE UNITED STATES, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT, FROM OUR OWN COUNTRY, TO EUROPE. WE WOULD ALSO HAVE TO KEEP OPEN AND SAFE THE PORTS AND SHIPPING ROUTES IN THE SHALLOW WATERS AROUND

THE UNITED KINGDOM AND WOULD DEPLOY THE UK/NL AMPHIBIOUS FORCE TO ITS OPERATING AREAS AS EARLY IN TENSION AS POSSIBLE. THE RETENTION OF THE LPDs WILL MEAN THAT THIS FORCE RETAINS ITS FLEXIBILITY FOR AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS, BOTH IN SUPPORT OF NATO AND OUT OF AREAS. THIS IS A DEMANDING LIST OF TASKS INVOLVING SURFACE SHIPS, SUBMARINES, RFAs, HELICOPTERS AND MARITIME VSTOL AND WELL AS RAF SHORE BASED AIRCRAFT. TO MEET THEM WE WILL STILL BE MAINTAINING A SUBSTANTIAL AND BALANCED FLEET AND WILL BE INTRODUCING A RANGE OF NEW WEAPON SYSTEMS. BUT TWO QUESTIONS MUST BE ASKED: WILL THIS BE ENOUGH? AND ARE THE SHAPE AND SIZE OF THE FUTURE FLEET THE BEST WE CAN AFFORD? MY ANSWER TO BOTH IS AN EMPHATIC "NO". A YEAR AGO THE FINANCIAL PRESSURE ON THE DEFENCE BUDGET, SHORT AND LONG TERM, WAS THE OVER-RIDING FACTOR IN MINISTERS' MINDS. BUT DEFENCE IS NOW IN A MARKEDLY DIFFERENT FINANCIAL SITUATION AND I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT EXTRA RESOURCES COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR THE NAVY WITHOUT GRAVE IMPACT ELSEWHERE. BASED ON THIS FINANCIAL PERCEPTION AND DRAWING ON 45 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN WAR, TENSION AND PEACE - ENDORSED BY THE PRESENT OPERATION IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC - I SEE THREE CLEAR NEEDS FOR THE NAVY.

WE MUST RETAIN 3 ASW CARRIERS. FOR REASONS OF LIFE-
EXPECTANCY, ECONOMY IN MANNING AND RUNNING, AND LOGISTIC
SUPPORT, THEY SHOULD BE THE INVINCIBLE CLASS.

WE MUST IMPROVE THE WEAPON SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS IN
OUR DESTROYERS AND FRIGATES AND CONTINUE TO DO SO IN THE
FUTURE.

WE MUST HOLD ONTO (AND IN DUE COURSE REPLACE) A MORE
VIABLE NUMBER OF OPERATIONAL DESTROYERS AND FRIGATES.

ALL THESE ASPECTS ARE WITHIN THE SENSIBLE AND BALANCED
LIMITS OF THE CURRENT DEFENCE BUDGET. UNLESS THEY ARE IMPLE-
MENTED WE SHALL BE DANGEROUSLY DEFICIENT AT SEA IN THE FUTURE.

LET ME END ON A BROADER NOTE WHICH AFFECTS ALL THREE
SERVICES. IT CONCERNS THE AGE-OLD DICHOTOMY OF QUALITY VERSUS
QUANTITY AND NEVER WAS IT MORE IMPORTANT TO GET THE BALANCE
RIGHT. IN RECENT TIMES CRITICISM HAS TENDED TO FOCUS ON WHAT
HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS EXCESSIVE SOPHISTICATION (AND HENCE COST);
"GOLDPLATING" HAS BEEN A RECURRENT ACCUSATION. LET US BE
ABSOLUTELY CLEAR ABOUT THIS MATTER. IT IS NOT ONLY THE
RUSSIANS WHO POSSESS MODERN, HIGH PERFORMANCE WEAPONS. THE
SHEFFIELD WAS SUNK BY A SINGLE EXOCET MISSILE - A WEAPON POSSESSED

BY A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES BUT NOT RUSSIA. THERE IS NOTHING
CLEVER ABOUT COMPLEXITY FOR ITS OWN SAKE. BUT EQUALLY
THERE IS NOTHING MORE RIDICULOUS THAN SIMPLICITY WHICH IS
INEFFECTIVE BUT FORCED THROUGH BECAUSE IT IS CHEAP.

IN CONCLUSION LET ME REMIND YOU OF THE TELLING REMARK
ONCE MADE BY EDMUND BURKE:

"THE ONLY THING NECESSARY FOR THE TRIUMPH OF EVIL IS FOR
GOOD MEN TO DO NOTHING."

"OR" HE MIGHT HAVE SAID - "NOT ENOUGH".