



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20350

6 March 1978

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SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Draft Consolidated Guidance-Information Memorandum

I appreciated the opportunity afforded this past weekend for a quick review of the Draft Consolidated Guidance before your meeting with the President. I was pleased to note the added emphasis on the NATO flanks and the worldwide contribution of naval forces. Similarly, I welcome the addition of the section on Military Strategy Guidance. Fundamentally, however, the forces sections of the Consolidated Guidance, especially sections L and M, are inconsistent with this military strategy, our NATO war plans, our DPQ commitments, and the thrust of our Naval Force Planning Study. In its final form, this study will be forwarded to you next week, and I think it imperative that the President withhold his decision on Naval Forces until you and he have had an opportunity to review it in its completed form.

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Furthermore, in my opinion the draft Consolidated Guidance still has fundamental flaws. The first is that it is not in fact "consolidated" -- that is, it is not a coherent whole because of basic inconsistency among its parts. For example, the fiscal guidance, because of the very low point of departure in the Fiscal Year 1979 budget and particularly when combined with the detailed program constraints, requires substantial force structure or modernization cuts--now or later. These cuts are incompatible with the sound objectives stated in the Military Strategy Guidance and regional sections. This conflict, at the least, should be explicitly recognized and the risks assessed, not buried in the details of tables or stated tentatively in a few footnotes.

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To "consolidate" the guidance for naval forces will, I fear, be a virtually impossible task if the forces sections, especially sections L and M, are used as a basis, although they are useful tutorials about some aspects of naval forces. They are, however, wholly unsatisfactory if our Navy is to maintain superiority at sea as we approach the end of this century.

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But this brings me to a second major problem that I have with this document: in addition to not being "consolidated", it is so disparate and detailed that it serves more as constraint than guidance. There are many explicit mandated items, plus well over 100 suggested items; and, finally, additional items on which the character of the guidance isn't clear, but may be either one of the foregoing or something in between. As we indicated in our meeting on 23 February, the guidance constrains a large portion of the Navy's budget even with the changes incorporated. This rigidity -- compounded somewhat by the specific (and sometimes conflicting) guidance from the Congress -- leaves little alternative but force cuts now or in the future with the shipbuilding account as the most likely source. As you will recall, our attempt to cut a major aviation program last fall was rejected. I fear that, by asking the President to approve a document with as detailed a set of assumptions and statements as are contained in the Consolidated Guidance, e.g., sections L and M, we may be creating serious problems for him.

In the midst of a coal strike, a crisis on the Horn of Africa, and the other matters -- large and small -- with which he must deal, do we really want to put him on the hook of expressly or even implicitly adopting such firm but perishable positions as, for example, that in a NATO war "early losses of combat and combat support equipment (from convoys) therefore, would amount to less than 8%".<sup>1/</sup> These details of quantitative analysis, while seemingly precise, are little more than hedged judgments concerning wars we have not fought. Given that change in such estimates is certain, are these the types of details we should hook the President into? In a similar vein, should we ask the President today to give his approval to the precise convoy routes to be used to cross the Atlantic in wartime to avoid Backfires? These sorts of problems cannot be fixed by a line-by-line correction of the naval forces sections of this document. They are endemic to the false sense of certainty and predictability that is in the pores of sections L and M.

<sup>1/</sup> page L-14 of March 1 draft of Consolidated Guidance

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One more example is, I think, illuminating on this general point. The Navy suggested in comments on the earlier draft that, in assessing sea control requirements, we should at least show what would be needed if an evacuation of defeated forces from Europe were necessary. PA&E does not agree to mention the subject in this document because "we are unable to do that analysis due to the uncertainty involved in the scenario. Furthermore, current policy is to preferentially fund forward defense forces so a Dunkirk can be avoided."<sup>1/</sup> The purpose of this document -- consolidated guidance supported at the Presidential level -- is not solely to transmit specific pieces of quantitative analysis, and a potential military disaster does not cease to be a cause of Presidential concern because "we are unable to do that analysis." A problem does not vanish because it cannot be quantified. Nor does it vanish because we adopt a "current policy to preferentially fund forward defense forces." The French and British had a similar policy in 1940.

The other major difficulty with sections L and M is that in organization and in prose, by trying to draw a clear, bright line between "sea control" and "power projection", the authors have artificially parsed the changing reality of naval warfare. As you know, we submitted a draft of an integrated naval forces section (i.e. putting the two sections together) to PA&E, hoping to work with them toward a common integrated draft. But I am uncertain as to the status of this effort. I do not dispute that, up until recently, a useful distinction for force planning purposes may have been drawn between "sea control" and "power projection" forces. But this document is supposed to look to the future -- it is not, supposedly, a history of naval force structure debates of the last 20 years. Cited below are just a few of the reasons why we believe "sea control" and "power projection" should be analyzed, planned, and programmed in the integrated fashion used in our Naval Force Planning Study.

<sup>1/</sup> page L-5 (facing)

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First, technology and tactics are changing in such a way as to cross up the old distinction. Carriers have always been capable of multiple purposes; but today not only do they carry ASW fixed wing aircraft and helicopters ("sea control forces") as part of their air wing, but also their first-line fighter, the F-14, has been optimized for the maritime air superiority ("sea control") mission -- defending against the Backfire. Carrier aircraft are now the major conventional weapon and will be, for some time, a major one against the increasingly formidable Soviet surface, subsurface and air capability ("sea control"). SSNs ("sea control" forces) now operate with increasing frequency in direct support, i.e. as part of battle groups. Moreover, with the advent of cruise missiles, surface ships such as cruisers and destroyers -- and even submarines -- may have some projection role.

The draft CG, however, in continuing to perpetuate the old force categories, adopts some confusing formulations. Some double counting is admittedly done. 1/ Mine countermeasures are treated as primarily an amphibious "power projection" 2/ issue in spite of the sea control problem that would be caused by Soviet mining of such deep water areas as the Western approaches to the English Channel. The document does not treat fully one of the important options considered by the Naval Force Planning Study -- that by planning our forces to take advantage, via offensive actions, of Soviet geographical limitations in the Far East and elsewhere, we may be able to do a better job of controlling the seas. That a good offense against the enemy's naval forces may be the best defense of the seas is not a new idea -- it has been shared by, among others, Nelson, Mahan and Nimitz. Yet the structure of this document, and the views of the drafters, have led not only to neglecting such linkages, but also to serious distortions of the Naval Force Planning Study. The suggestion that taking advantage of such Soviet weaknesses

- 1/ page M-4, note a  
2/ page M-20

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be a consideration in force planning is characterized by PA&E as the study "advocating" the "use" of forces in certain ways. 1/

There are other indications of form conquering function in sections L and M. The problem of sea control in the Pacific is slighted: "we do not believe that [the effect of worldwide war on the Pacific] is a central issue in forces for defense of the sea lanes". 2/ And the demanding problem of availability of land bases in the Mediterranean in a major war growing out of a Mid East crisis is simply blinked. All of these are messy, intractable issues. But I don't think that means they can or should be ignored.

I am also concerned that the 7 March draft Consolidated Guidance continues to provide mandatory guidance that reduces amphibious lift to 115% MAF AE. As the Commandant has pointed out, this position is based in large measure on judgments that fail to consider the long-standing views held by the Unified Commanders and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. For example, the statement that "There is no rationale to support more than a MAB-size operation with assault shipping in either ocean during a non-NATO crisis,"3/ surprisingly overlooks the several existing contingency plans, that call for the employment of MAF-size amphibious capabilities. I recommend that you cancel the proposed mandatory guidance to program amphibious lift at 115% MAF, and allow the LSD-41 program to continue. The Department of the Navy should be permitted to program for amphibious ship procurement in such a way that balanced fleet capabilities can be maintained.

In the attachment, I am including additional comments of a more specific nature. In these I will not repeat comments already submitted in response to the 17 January draft, but will limit my discussion to what I consider are issues of substance in areas that are changed from the January version.

The comments of the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps have been incorporated in those included herein.

- 1/ page M-10-11
- 2/ page L-15 (facing)
- 3/ page ~~L-15 (facing)~~ M-24

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In my view, our Naval Force Planning Study treats all of these sorts of problems more realistically than the artificial categories and quantitative fixation in the forces sections, and especially sections L and M. It is for this reason that I urgently request that you ask the President to withhold decision on Naval forces until he has had the opportunity to review the Naval Force Planning Study. You will have it the middle of this month.



W. Graham Clayton, Jr.  
Secretary of the Navy

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Attachment

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