

MARITIME SOVEREIGNTY

INTRODUCTION

To argue that we are living in a fundamentally changed international environment is to state the obvious; however, important questions still remain. The Cold War has come to an end and the structures through which international relations have been conducted for the last 40 years are either withering away or undergoing a reevaluation of their primary purpose. While the only remaining task for the Warsaw Pact is the writing of its epitaph, NATO will probably remain an important instrument for the enhancement of stability. At the same time, NATO can be expected to place greater emphasis on its political, rather than military, dimension.

Although the warming of relations between the superpowers can only be regarded as positive, this will make little difference to the basic tasks of their navies. At times they will limit each other's actions, while on other occasions they may act in concert, but their purpose of furthering their countries' maritime interests will remain. And, as it does today, the submarine nuclear deterrent will remain the last guarantee that neither side can make a bid for overall dominance.⁽¹⁾

But while the main actors and their basic maritime interests will remain the same, this cannot be said of their respective allies. For the last 45 years, the Soviet and American navies have been backed by the naval forces of the lesser powers that belonged to their respective alliances. This is the aspect of naval affairs that will change the most in the coming years. It will be increasingly difficult for both the Soviet Union and the United States to preserve any real military alliance when no actual threat is apparent.⁽²⁾

The traditional post-war fear of Canadians has been that of a nuclear war between the superpowers, with themselves caught in the middle. Canada's membership in NATO and its cooperation with the United States in the defence of North America was seen as a way of helping avert such a disaster. However, with the threat of nuclear war diminishing, Canada may find reason to rethink its current commitments to these alliances.⁽³⁾

Historically, Canada's maritime defence strategy and its maritime forces have been conditioned by collective security and East-West relations in the climate of the Cold War, as well as by national interests. As East-West relations change and the international

(1) C.D. Maginley, "Maritime Priorities in the Post-Cold War Era: The Necessary Redeployment of Canada's Maritime Resources," written submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, July 1990, p. 1. See also, Maginley, "What Do We Do With Our Forces?" Policy Options, September 1990.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Ibid.*