

access by a variety of ASW sensors and weapons systems to the area in question. In the case of sanctuaries close to the coasts of either superpower, such access by its adversary (with the sole exception of nuclear-powered attack submarines), especially in a time of crisis or war, would be very limited, indeed.

As in the case of other suggested controls on strategic ASW, the need for sanctuaries has been discounted, on the grounds that a disarming strike against the entire SSBN fleet of either superpower is not now feasible and will not be so for the foreseeable future, given the limitations of ASW, particularly in coordinating such a massive, simultaneous attack, and given likely countermeasures. However, such an assessment ignores the far more real danger that, in the course of a protracted conventional war at sea — particularly if SSBNs are deliberately targeted for early destruction, as in the US Navy's current "Maritime Strategy" — the gradual attrition of one side's sea-based deterrent could result in escalation to the nuclear level.<sup>169</sup> While retaliation against an adversary's actual homeland would invite an intercontinental nuclear exchange and might not therefore be a plausible response, escalation to the tactical nuclear level, against other high-value naval targets such as aircraft carriers, certainly could be. SSBN sanctuaries would be stabilizing in this respect, even discounting the threat of an all-out first strike on the sea-based deterrent.

The specific proposal for a Barents Sea sanctuary has been attacked by Norwegian analysts as jeopardizing their country's position in various offshore disputes with the Soviet Union.<sup>170</sup> Ken Booth's proposal that such a sanctuary be limited to the exclusive economic zone of the Soviet Union would help mitigate this problem. However, if it were desirable to expand the sanctuary to include a greater portion of the Barents Sea — particularly since the Soviet side is generally more shallow and hence less suitable for SSBN

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169. For an excellent analysis of this problem as applied to the Nordic area, see: Barry R. Posen, "Inadvertent Nuclear War? Escalation and NATO's Northern Flank," *International Security* 7:2, Fall 1982, pp. 28-54.

170. See, e.g., Holst, *op. cit.* note 167.