

to protect the “bastions” from attack. If the latter were not threatened by Western ASW forces, so the argument goes, much larger numbers of Soviet aircraft, surface vessels, and submarines would be freed up to interdict the vital Western sea lines of communication (SLOCs). However, whether the Soviets could, or would, actually rely on the sanctity of the “ASW-free zone” in the event of crisis or war is somewhat doubtful. More likely, they would draw back into their bastions in any event, not trusting the West to respect the agreement. The existence of the formally recognized sanctuary could still have a stabilizing impact, however, in constituting a kind of fire-break that a potential intruder might hesitate to cross, even in wartime.

Another traditional objection to the idea of an SSBN sanctuary is that it may actually serve to increase the vulnerability of the sea-based deterrent by concentrating such vessels in a relatively restricted area, which might then be subject to “barrage” attacks by the adversary’s ballistic missiles. At the very least, it is argued, the opponent’s ASW task would be facilitated by allowing him to focus his efforts in a particular area.<sup>167</sup> The feasibility of barrage attacks on SSBNs has been a matter of some controversy among specialists, but the two most recent comprehensive studies of “strategic ASW” agree that it is not a viable option for either of the Superpowers. Tom Stefanick, for example, calculates that the number of equivalent megatons (EMT) necessary for high-confidence destruction of all SSBNs within areas as large as the Barents Sea (394,000 nm<sup>2</sup>) or Sea of Okhotsk (452,000 nm<sup>2</sup>) would be 10,600 and 12,100, respectively. Yet the entire US arsenal of ICBMs and SLBMs in 1985 carried a total of “only” 2,207 EMT.<sup>168</sup> The degree to which the ASW task might nevertheless be rendered easier, by the concentration of SSBNs within a sanctuary, would depend on the degree of

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167. See e.g., Johan Holst, in: Jan H. Veldman and Frits Th. Olivier (eds.), *West-European Navies and the Future*. Den Helder: Royal Netherlands Naval College, 1980, pp. 91-93, for this and other criticisms of the “sanctuary” idea.

168. Stefanick, *Strategic Antisubmarine Warfare and Naval Strategy*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1987, pp. 37-38; see also: Donald C. Daniel, *Anti-Submarine Warfare and Superpower Strategic Stability*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986, pp. 20-21.