

couver Island. During this deployment the task group demonstrated a significant improvement in their tactical skills from those observed in a similar Soviet deployment in 1971.

In the 1971 Soviet deployment, the Russian ships were about five years old, and the Canadian destroyer conducting surveillance duties was about eight years old. In 1981 the Soviet ships were virtually new and the Canadian destroyer observing the force was 22 years old.¹⁹

The situation on the air side is comparable. In the late-1960s there were thirty-two state-of-the-art LPRAs in service, backed up by over forty reasonably new Trackers with an ASW capability, and thirty-four almost new Sea King ASW helicopters. The west coast had fifteen of these aircraft and the remainder were on the east coast. In 1983 there are eighteen Auroras, eighteen Trackers (divested of their ASW equipment and their parent aircraft-carrier), and thirty-five Sea Kings. These helicopters are beginning to show their age. Recently, they were all grounded because of defects in the engine mounts. Only seven fixed-wing aircraft, three of them Trackers, and no helicopters are assigned to the west coast.

Not only do the numbers and quality of MARCOM's equipment call into question its ability to fulfil its tasks and meet its commitments, but the distribution of resources also raises some questions. For example NATO lists twenty Canadian escorts among its assets. Technically, as part of NATO's Canada-U.S. region, they are. However, eight of them are stationed on the west coast and, hence, in reality, are highly unlikely to be available for duties in the Atlantic, whatever NATO military commanders may hope. No Canadian government, if engaged in hostilities or confronted with the immediate prospect of hostilities, could denude the west coast of its defences, however frail they might be. RAdm Martin noted:

... when somebody says that we have committed a certain number of destroyers to NATO, everybody thinks we will be sending them all to the Atlantic. I simply point out that we have a two ocean problem now and we have a two ocean navy. We cannot ignore the fact that we have defence commitments in the Pacific which are just as binding as the ones which exist in the Atlantic.²⁰

No matter which way the issue is approached, even the most cursory examination leads to the judgement that MARCOM's capabilities fall woefully short of the requirements which the government itself has recognized.

Needed revisions to maritime defence requirements

Strategic, technological, political and other circumstances have of course changed in various respects since 1971, so that one needs to ask not only whether MARCOM can meet requirements established earlier, but also whether these requirements are the right ones for the 1980s and 1990s. Given the need for a greater focus on self-defence and taking into account the Soviet capabilities discussed in chapter I, a number of tasks which do not appear in the current list should be assigned to MARCOM. Other tasks which are on the list may be called

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 43:22.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 8 February, 1983, p. 38:32.