



# SITREP

A PUBLICATION OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN MILITARY INSTITUTE

## DEFENCE POLICY AT A TIME OF 'TRANSFORMATION'



(Photo Credit: UK Ministry of Defence)

**UK Armed Forces during the ground combat phase of the Iraq War, as part of Operation Telic.**

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

At the time of this writing, the Canadian government has recently shelved a Defence Department proposal to fast-track the Canadian Forces (CF) procurement process in order to acquire much needed transport aircraft and helicopters for CF troops in Afghanistan.

Interestingly, this decision follows on the heels of a recent expert symposium organized by the Standing Senate Committee on National Security on the continuing erosion of Canada's defence capabilities. The Institute was fortunate to have Col (Retd) Brian MacDonald, Chair of Defence Studies at the RCMI, invited to participate in this symposium, where he offered his well-respected view on the continuing 'rust-out' of CF capabilities. We are doubly fortunate to begin this issue of *SITREP* with his analysis – based on his Senate remarks – of the problems associated with the CF procurement process, in the article titled "The Race With Rustout: Can We Close the Procurement Gap?"

One of the most 'transformational' procurement projects proposed by Chief of Defence Staff, General Rick Hillier, is the Multi-mission Effects Vehicle (MMEV). However, there are continuing questions on both the wisdom of this procurement decision, and whether it does indeed represent movement towards the much vaunted 'transformation' of the CF. It is therefore our pleasure to have Mr. David Rudd, President and Executive Director of the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, offer his thoughts on this procurement project in "The Multi-mission Effects Vehicle: A Costly Setback for Army Transformation."

The conflict in Iraq represents a very interesting case study that will – in all likelihood – provide much 'lessons learned' for both advocates and critics of military transformation in the Canadian Forces. A particular good case study can be provided by the UK Armed Forces in Iraq. To shed further light on this issue, we are very fortunate to have an article titled "Sustainability of UK

Forces in Iraq," by Amyas Godfrey, Head of the UK Armed Forces Programme at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI). We are especially pleased to be able to feature our colleague from RUSI, as this organization – the oldest of its kind in the world – provided the key model in the founding of the RCMI itself.

Transformation is intimately connected to power projection, and we conclude this issue with two articles that examine this capability from two different perspectives. The first article, titled "Preparing for the Failure of Deterrence," examines the Bush administration's revisions to American nuclear policy, particularly its growing emphasis on 'global strike' missions. It is written by the well-known nuclear weapons expert Hans Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists.

This issue concludes with an analysis of Varyag aircraft carrier, and its possible role in China's plans to improve its power projection capabilities through the development of a blue-water Navy. It is written by long-time *SITREP* contributor and colleague Professor Sunil Ram from American Military University.

On a sadder note, this will be my last issue as the Editor of *SITREP*, as I will be moving to the International Institute for Strategic Studies as a Research Associate in January of 2006. I would first like to thank Col MacDonald and Professor Ram for their critical support in my position as Editor, and for the many informative discussions on the issues featured in this publication. I would also like to thank the many contributors to *SITREP*, for playing a critical role in this publication's 'transformation' into a strategic studies magazine. To my successor, I wish the best of luck. ■

Sincerely yours,

David S. McDonough



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# THE RACE WITH RUSTOUT: CAN WE CLOSE THE PROCUREMENT GAP?

by Col (Retd) Brian S. MacDonald

The Canadian Forces (CF) are at the intersection of three extremely difficult factors that, collectively, are destroying their ability to operate as a coherent national security and defence policy instrument.

Those factors are first, the extreme age of the equipment, both physical and technological, which is critical to the ability to undertake operations in support of security policy; the second is the accelerating technology cycle which makes it now necessary for "mid-life" refits to be done three and four times over the physical life of major platforms; and third, the extraordinary length of the procurement cycle to be worked through before new equipment can be brought on stream.

We can get some understanding of the physical life cycle problem by simply starting with Treasury Board figures for average physical life expectancies, and then checking to see where we stand in the Canadian Forces. Treasury Board life expectancies can be seen in the following table:

Platform	Life Expectancy
Ships and boats:	10 to 25 years
Aircraft	10 to 20 years
Military vehicles	3 to 20 years
Arms and weapons for defence	5 to 10 years
Informatics hardware	3 to 5 years
Informatics software	1 to 10 years

Table 1: Treasury Board Life Expectancies

When we look at the CF equipment inventory as a whole, we can see how acute the problem has become by subdividing the totals into those which are now beyond the end of the Treasury Board Life Expectancies, those which have passed beyond their "half-life" point, and those which have more than half their lives left. Table 2 shows the proportions of the three services major platforms which fall into each category. It isn't a pretty picture, with half the major platforms of the CF "life expired" (or "dead"), and another quarter beyond their "half-life."

That is the physical dimension of rust out. There is, as well, the technological dimension of rust out. Here Treasury Board has noted that if we are talking about information and communications technology, which is sometimes referred to by the buzz word "infomatics" hardware, we can expect computers, such as

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Service	Beyond Life Expectancy	Beyond "Half-Life" Expectancy	More than "Half Life" Remaining
Air Force	71%	29%	0%
Navy	40%	40%	20%
Army	27%	18%	55%
<b>CF As a Whole</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>31%</b>

Table 2: CF Major Platform Service Life by Service

those that we have on our own desks, to have a technology life cycle of between three and five years.

"Infomatics" software, particularly that involved with sensors and weapons, can be even more problematic with a technology as short as one year in some cases, particularly where the technology is at the beginning of the technology cycle when updates are most frequent.

Thus, a brand new "state of the art" platform that has theoretical physical life expectancy of, say, 20 years, there will to have its technology upgraded according to the technology cycle, which may very well require four cycles to be dealt with during the course of the physical life of that platform.

## The Procurement Cycle Conundrum

Set against this is, of course, the agonizing length of the "Procurement Cycle," the length of time that it takes to get a project from start to finish. Both the Auditor-General and the Minister's Advisory Committee on Administrative Efficiency have identified the "Procurement Cycle" to be 15-16 years, which is well beyond the remaining life expectancy of so many of our major military platforms.

A cynic might comment that in 16 years we could have fought World War I four times, or World War Two three times!

But the critical problem remains that we are now dealing with a procurement cycle that is averaging 75 per cent of the physical life cycle of the CF's major platforms, according to the Treasury Board figures. Unless we now take steps promptly to solve the problem of the procurement cycle, the department is in an ever narrowing death spiral that will lead to the probability of a mass extinction of the forces within the next 10 to 15 years.

The Minister's Advisory Committee on Administrative Efficiency identified internal Department of National Defence (DND) procedures as a very significant part of the problem, noting that:

The Committee finds that Defence's internal process for defining requirements and approving capital projects takes too long (nine years out of the average 15-16 year process required to procure major equipment), involves too many successive reviews, occupies too much senior management time for little added value, and fails, from a process perspective, to distinguish between common goods and complex weapons systems.

The Committee proposed "a revised capital approval process for consideration. This process is designed to result in significant savings in the overall capital acquisition process, principally by halving the current nine-year period that it currently takes just to award procurement contracts. Adopting the recommended changes would reduce the average overall project life cycle from the current 15-16 year average to between 10-12 years by placing shorter time limits on certain internal stages of the process (for example, one to two years for requirements definition)."

Yet by early 2005 the problems seemed still to be unresolved, with one representative of a major Canadian defence contractor commenting privately, at the March 4, 2004 Conference of Defence Associations Annual General Meeting, that it was still taking four years to produce a Statement of Requirements; and a junior Staff Officer on one of the Project Management teams complaining in private conversation that the constant requirement for the negotiation of non-military and inter-departmental aspects was causing severe delays; and a senior officer observing that the most important problem faced by the department was not the provision of capital funding, but the delay in being able to get the authority to commit it to the actual procurement itself.

It certainly seems that the imposition of non-military objectives on top of military objectives is a major source of the delay. It is ironic that the military has always taught its officers, from the most minor tactics to the realm of grand strategy, the danger of a "Divided Aim," and has held that "The Selection and Maintenance of the Aim" to be the most important Principle of War.

It is pity that the military has never had charge of the education of our politicians!

Two areas of the political provision of "Divided Aims" stand out. One is the insistence that military procurement serve also as a vehicle for the achievement of "Industrial and Regional Benefits" (IRBs). Unfortunately, as the Auditor-General has pointed out, nobody has thought to measure either the financial cost or the operational cost of the time delays of achieving what have been in a number of cases highly dubious political objectives. Moreover, the usual result of such "Divided Aims" has us been the achievement of either the military or the IRB Aim, but seldom (never?) both.

One thinks of the Patrol Frigate Project, which produced a very capable ship, but the yard in St. John which built the majority of them eventually closed because it was not cost-competitive in the global civilian shipping market, and had no further Canadian naval ships to build. And one thinks of the human costs to the workers and families who moved to St. John to work on the contract, only to be thrown out of work when the IRB objective failed.

The other is the failure to include a "military exclusion" in the *Agreement on Internal Trade* (AIT), which is a joint federal/provincial agreement that any government contract at either level be open to contractors located in any province or territory. The agreement's requirement for absolute transparency in the establishment of open contract requirements, and the provision of the right of losing bidders to appeal decisions to the Canadian International Trade Tribunal, and to receive awards of damages for the loss of profit because of "flawed" contracting processes may well be at the heart of the staff officer's complaint that "the constant requirement for the negotiation of non-military and inter-departmental aspects was causing severe delays."

Indeed, a media report has suggested that the bizarre delay in the "Fixed Wing Search and Rescue Project," even after the Government had allocated an extra "off budget" \$300 million to accelerate the project, may have had its roots in the IRB/AIT process, with political interference designed to eliminate the requirement for a rear ramp from the "Statement of Requirements" on the basis that while the Italian and Spanish aircraft can meet the requirement, there was no indigenous Canadian aircraft company which builds a plane with a rear ramp capacity, which might compete for the contract.

It may be that Canadian defence procurement provides a magnificent example of the "Law of Good Intentions" and "Law of Unintended Consequences" in action, or alternatively, of our frequent habit of shooting ourselves in the foot.

The sad reality is that if we cannot or do not fix the Procurement Cycle crisis, we will very shortly have the policy crisis when critical capabilities have dropped off the table through rustout, and neither the Americans nor the Russian and Ukrainian contractors who supply the giant Antonov-124s to transport Canadian military cargo around the world will be able or willing to bail us out. ■

*The views expressed are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute or its members.*



# THE MULTI-MISSION EFFECTS VEHICLE: A COSTLY SETBACK FOR ARMY TRANSFORMATION

by David Rudd

On 22 September Defence Minister Bill Graham announced the government's intention to convert the army's semi-retired air defence anti-tank system (ADATS) into the multi-mission effects vehicle (MMEV). The intent, aside from completing the army's transition to a virtually all-wheeled fleet, is "to significantly improve situational awareness by providing commanders with around-the-clock surveillance, and by sharing data and intelligence between vehicles and command posts."

The \$750-million program will see the grafting of the ADATS turret and electronics from the M-113 armoured personnel carrier onto the light armoured vehicle (LAV-3) chassis. It will also see the purchase of up to 13 LAV-based command posts and the installation of the new Link-16 communications system, enabling MMEVs to communicate with other services. Said the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Rick Hillier, "The MMEV represents a significant step forward in army transformation. It will increase our efficiency, interoperability and deployability."

Really? Is there evidence to suggest that the MMEV represents good value for money? Will it enhance the army's mobility and ability to work alongside key allies? More importantly, what is its relevance to the security environment in which the Canadian Forces are expected to operate?

As a "transformational" program, the MMEV is of some merit. The ability to engage both ground and air targets using the same vehicle, and at ranges of up to 8 km, makes for a formidable capability. But the program falls short on so many other critical fronts as to make it a dubious choice for an army struggling with persistent budgetary hardship.

The Canadian Forces (CF) are quite rightly pre-occupied with the challenges of strategic mobility. But since the only way to transport the MMEV and its accompanying vehicles is by sea, or by allied or chartered airlift, the costly transfer of the ADATS turret and electronics to the LAV-3 chassis seems wholly unnecessary, as the latter offers no weight savings over the M-113. The



Photo Credit: Oerlikon Aerospace

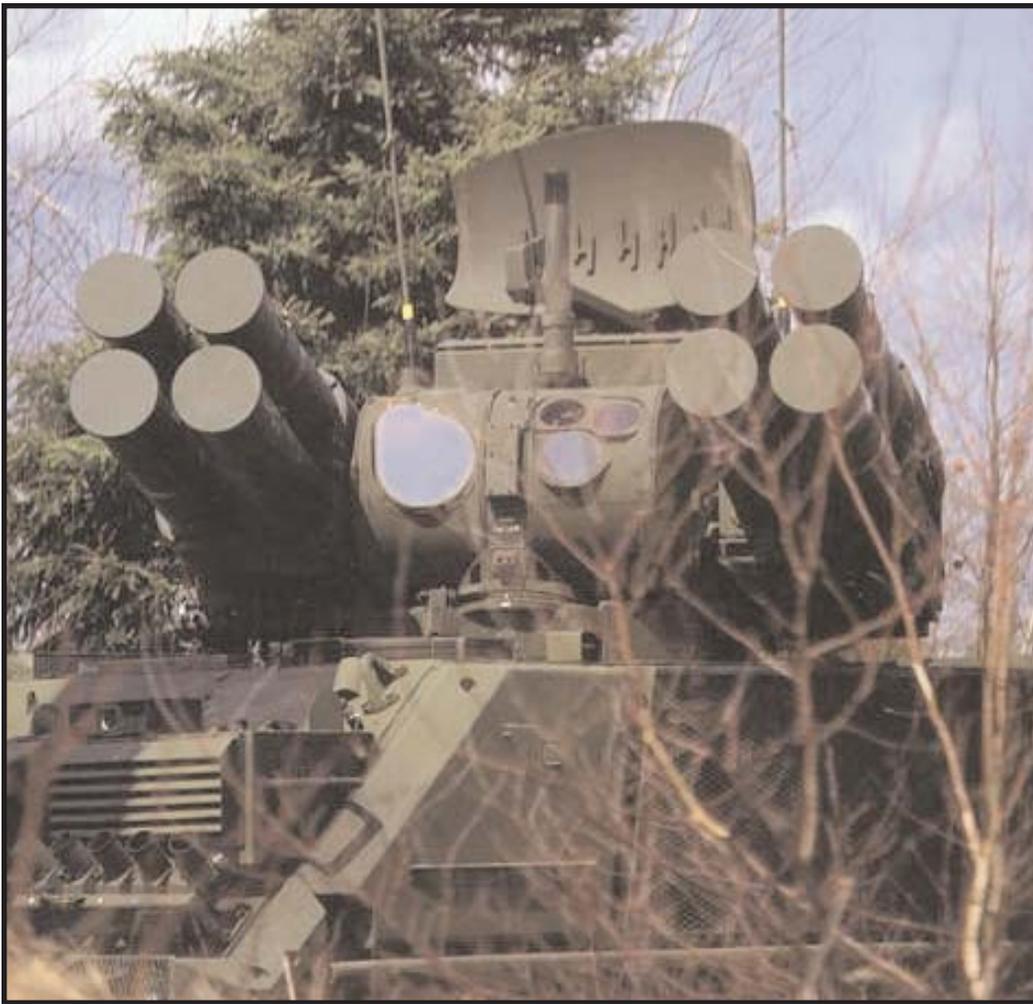
*An artist's conception of the Multi-mission Effects Vehicle (MMEV).*

MMEV may be transportable on the CC-130 Hercules after partial dismantling of the turret assembly, but 15 years of expeditionary operations have shown that Canadian armour is not transportable by Hercules.

From a tactical perspective the MMEV may also be redundant. The army intends to amalgamate different platforms into a "direct fire unit" of approximately regimental strength. This will involve the procurement of both the Mobile Gun System (MGS) and the LAV-mounted version of the tube-launched, optically-tracked, wire-guided (TOW) missile. MMEV will be the third part of this triad. But the MGS/LAV-TOW combination will be sufficient to give the army a potent anti-armour/anti-fortification capability.

Adding MMEV would conceivably give it the ability to prosecute targets at longer ranges, but there seem to be precious few scenarios in which Canadian gunners will have an unobstructed field of view for 8 km. Only the deserts of the Middle East offer such opportunities, and Ottawa has steadfastly refused to send Canadian troops to war there. If, on the other hand, they become embroiled in the urban areas which characterize the "three-block war," fields of view could shrink to only a few hundred metres. This is hardly a place for MMEV, whose main virtue is its long-range detection systems and firepower.

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*The Air Defence Anti-tank System (ADATS) will be grafted onto the planned MMEV acquisitions.*

There is further evidence of redundancy. The Department of National Defence (DND) claims that MMEV will be able to provide situational awareness through round-the-clock surveillance. Is this not what the Coyote surveillance vehicle is for? Would not a portion of the \$750-million slated for MMEV be better invested in allowing the Coyote to transmit video images and other surveillance data back to higher headquarters in real time?

As if to stake out new operational territory for the MMEV, the DND announcement included a cryptic reference to its ability to strike targets behind hillsides using non-line-of-sight weapons. This would require the procurement of, say, a fibre optic-guided missile (FOGM), but none are currently in allied service or in development. It is therefore a statement against the "transformational" value of MMEV that its effectiveness lies in a weapons package that either does not exist or may never exist.

Then there is the issue of cost-effectiveness. Clearly the direct fire support function can be more easily and cheaply accomplished by placing a more potent weapon on the LAV-TOW vehicle. (The American Hellfire, or its successor, the Joint Common Missile, are worthy of consideration.) Alternatively, a cannon-launched missile (such as the Israeli LAHAT) could be deployed on MGS. In close-quarters fighting, the bunker-bust-

ing job is best left to cheaper infantry-portable weapons. Thus a third vehicle for direct fire support is truly an unnecessary expense.

As Canada is the only NATO country to use ADATS there will be major cost disadvantages to keeping it in service over the duration of its lifespan. As with the other great "strategic orphan" in the CF's inventory – the *Victoria*-class submarine – no one will share in the system upgrade/development costs. No ally will be able to provide logistical support for the vehicle's weapons systems in the field. Thus the MMEV fails a critical interoperability test.

From a strategic standpoint, the necessity of maintaining a three-vehicle fleet for direct fire support in the post-Cold War era is dubious. While stationed in Europe the army fielded two direct fire vehicles: the Leopard tank and, later, the TOW Under Armour variant of the M-113. If two vehicles were judged adequate to fight Soviet tank armies, why does the

army require a total of three vehicles (including two missile-carriers) for ground support in today's strategic climate? Clearly, any post-Cold War operational scenario will be considerably less target-rich than the Fulda Gap of the 1980s.

Likewise it could be argued that the new security environment casts doubt on the importance of maintaining a surface-to-air capability to protect formations of Canadian ground troops. Current policy dictates that Canadian Forces will never deploy outside a coalition. The April 2005 Defence Policy Statement (DPS) effectively terminated the commitment to furnish a brigade for coalition operations. Henceforth, only 1,200-person "task forces" will be dispatched overseas. With such a small in-theatre footprint, it seems reasonable to expect that allies could take responsibility for the defence of coalition airspace.

And herein lies the real rub. While the DPS stresses the need for combat-capable forces, it does not even entertain the possibility that Canada be fighting anyone other than guerrillas and insurgents in the years ahead. General Hillier has himself said repeatedly that we face not "the bear," but rather "a ball of snakes". Such parties fight asymmetrically; their ambush/hit-and-run tactics call upon small arms, light weapons and improvised explosive

*Continued on page 12*

# SUSTAINABILITY OF UK FORCES IN IRAQ

by Amyas Godfrey

Doubts surrounding the sustainability of the UK's Armed Forces in Iraq have been growing in frequency over the last year. This is not only due to the media coverage of some specific incidents, but also involves the British public's growing weariness of the entire situation. Some quarters of public opinion have been calling for the ubiquitous 'bring the troops home for Christmas' pledge while other more informed individuals are asking for the British Government to announce a timeline for withdrawal. Both of these points of view, however, ignore the fact that a swift conclusion to operations in Iraq does not necessarily equate to a success. No one with any credibility has yet suggested abandoning Operation Telic, as the British deployment to Iraq is known. However, if plans involving timelines are to be considered, then the question of sustainability is surely one that needs answering.

The sustainability of UK Forces in Iraq can be looked at in two parts: are they sustainable militarily, and are they sustainable politically? Whether these questions are inextricably interlinked or are separate issues very much depends on the way you look at the question. Theoretically they are mutually exclusive questions; however, in the reality that is now "the situation in Iraq," and under the ever increasing pressure of public opinion at home, they are completely and perhaps detrimentally dependent upon one another. The real overriding question that needs to be asked when looking at British involvement in Iraq is for what purpose do we require our Armed Forces to be sustainable?

British Forces currently occupy two provinces in the south-east of Iraq, Al Basrah and Maysan. There are several specific features of this area that are worth highlighting here as they have a great influence on British military operations. First and foremost this area is the centre of Iraq's oil wealth. Considering oil extraction, refining and exportation, it accounts for nearly 90% of all of Iraq's oil industry. This area is crucial to Iraq's income and economy – and therefore its future. At the same time this also makes it a target for smuggling, which subsequently funds criminality and, ultimately, insurgency.

The second feature of this area is its two hundred mile border with Iran. Of course the border itself has created some interesting incidents, not least of which was the seizure and detainment by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard of eight Royal Marines in 2004 who were patrolling the Shat-al-Basrah, the river that marks the border itself. Although this tense situation ended without any consequences, it is possible that a similar incident might take place that – with relations with Tehran strained as they are – would not end so well.

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Another issue raised by the shared border between Iraq and Iran is that of the crossing points. Along this stretch there is only one legal border-crossing point, situated in the Maysan Province, a desolate backwater which became a battleground during the Iran-Iraq War. As a result of this crossing point's location, there are a great deal of 'illegal' crossings made in and around the Basrah area, far to the south, where a greater density of population on both sides is located. Although the vast majority of daily crossings are economically or socially driven, it is difficult for British Forces – due to the sheer volume of traffic – to detect activity of a criminal or terrorist nature even if they had the manpower to dedicate to this task. While there is no doubt that there is sinister activity coming from across the border, this is by no means an indication of state or institutional involvement by Iran itself. This has yet to be proven.

The third important feature of the British area of operations is the largely Shia Muslim population specific to the south. These Shia have a history of opposition to Saddam Hussein and therefore the Sunni Muslim population by association. At the same time they also have strong links to the Iranian Shia Muslim population situated across the border. This adds still further reasons for 'illegal' border crossing; many Shia religious festivals and sites are in southern Iraq and therefore attract large numbers of Iranian pilgrims.

This close cultural tie between Iraqi Shia and Iranian Shia has also created a further complication in the British Area of Responsibility (AOR). There is growing influence from the radical Shia establishment on the population and institutions of southern Iraq. This has been most notable in the city of Basrah and especially amongst its police. Not because the Iraqi Police are more influenced than any other areas of the population, but rather because – by the nature of their job – this influence is more easily identified and holds far greater consequences.

Against this backdrop of specific influences, the British Forces in southern Iraq face the now well known and well established insurgency. However, the nature of the insurgency seen here is specific to this area and can be broken down into four broad types:

1. Criminal (including tribal and reactionary violence such as incidents triggered by a lack of electricity or the arrest of a tribal member);
2. Ex-regime (now almost disappeared, though specific areas of expertise have moved into the other three types);
3. Shia Extremism (characterised by the militia of the radical Shia Cleric, Muqtadr al Sadr);

4. Sunni Extremism – al Zargawi/al Qaeda (rare and unable to operate effectively due to southern Iraq being a non-permissive environment to them).

It is in this environment and against these threats, criminality and Shia extremism being the most common, that the British Forces in Iraq must operate and against which we must weigh the question of their sustainability.

Britain currently has 8,000 troops committed to Iraq, recently reduced by five hundred. Most of these troops are part of the reinforced brigade which conducts daily operations in the British AOR, but others work in Multi-National Division (South East) and in the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in Baghdad. The brigade, armoured or mechanized, rotates every six months to bring in fresh units. Two years into Op Telic, however, many units have completed two tours and one or two are looking forward to their third before next year is complete. Although this commitment is the UK's second largest military deployment (Northern Ireland still remaining above this level, although perhaps not for long), the British military is also committed to sending 3,500 to Afghanistan in May 2006 as part of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) deployment.

On the face of it and purely in terms of numbers, both of these commitments are sustainable at least for a year running concurrently. The ARRC deployment is initially for six months and the numbers in Iraq are expected to decline over the next year. Unfortunately, as is well known in the military, "no plan survives contact with the enemy." Numbers may be one issue, but people certainly are another. The current changes occurring in the British Army entail a plan to cut the Infantry by four battalions by 2008, a process that has already begun. With some infantry units having just completed their second tour in Iraq and now facing a tour with the ARRC, only to return to the UK in time to be amalgamated into another unit, the worry is the continuing retention of sol-

diers who are not able to balance their home lives with their military commitments. This more than many things may have a serious effect on the sustainability of operations abroad.

However, considering the situation in Iraq and the UK's commitment to it, maintaining the status quo is within the capability of the British Armed Forces. Britain has a great deal of experience in dealing with this type of situation. Although no historical parallels are ever exactly the same, there are many lessons that can be learnt and reapplied, most notably from counter-insurgency campaigns in Malaya and Northern Ireland, but also from any of the myriad colonial, post-colonial and recent expeditionary operations conducted by the UK Armed Forces. Although neither Malaya nor Northern Ireland provide exact parallels, it is possible for the current crop of military commanders to draw lessons learnt from the Malaya Emergency (1947-1960), and indeed most of them are steeped in their own experiences of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

From the British experience in Malaya, today's planners can take away the need for a more integrated approach to defeating insurgency. From the start of the campaign in Malaya, there was always a clear and defined government objective for which the military was but one tool. Up until this point in Iraq, the military has been perhaps the only tool used to achieve objectives that, beyond the defeat of the insurgents, have been unclear. There are some differences between Malaya and Iraq, not least of which is the lack of a colonial history with its 'occupiers' and an already existent colonial government and bureaucracy involving, and relying on, the local population. There was also a great effort in Malaya to separate the insurgent from the people through many mediums, not only militarily, but also socially and economically. This had the effect of polarising the two and eventually isolating the insurgency, against which the military could more effectively be applied.

Here lies one of the many short-comings in the apparent policy in Iraq. There is a growing perception that the two sides in

*With one man on guard, the Royal Air Force (RAF) ground forces in Iraq prepare to cover their military vehicles.*



Photo Credit: UK Ministry of Defence

Iraq are the people, which here include the insurgents, and the Coalition Forces. This growing chasm of perception is only exacerbated when Coalition military operations against insurgents cause casualties, misery or displacement to the local population without any recompense to what they have suffered. In Malaya the British authorities succeeded in re-settling nearly half a million local Malay into new villages which were furnished with clean-running water, electricity, 24-hour protection and the chance of employment. Although it was not immediately met with approval, it did allow the population to discover what was being offered to them by the British authorities without the continued threat of intimidation from the insurgents.

Although the situation in Iraq differs from Malaya in many respects, the opportunity to apply many of the lessons learnt is now nearly two and a half years in the past and the current situation is born out of a failure to apply almost any policy or plan in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. The transition from tactical doctrine to operational level application has failed comprehensively and it is this that led to the early stuttering and bewildered stages of what became the Coalition Provisional Authority.

The failure of the CPA, however, cannot be blamed on the success of the insurgency because it did not exist in any great strength when the CPA was failing the most – in its early days. It was because of an absence of strategy, a failure to coordinate, and a real lack of cultural acclimatisation, all under the complete void of an all inclusive doctrine, that the CPA failed in 2003.

Last month the Iraqi Government announced that it will accept back any former junior officers from Saddam's army into the new Iraqi armed forces. It is hoped that this initiative – an attempt to beat the insurgency through employment and inclusion – will help address the perception that the country is splitting along the lines of a Shia government and institutions that have excluded the once dominant Sunni minority. More recently we have heard from the Iraqi President that he believes the Iraqi

Armed Forces will be able to take over operations from the Coalition Forces by the end of 2006. Previously there has been no timeline for Iraq, but rather milestones and waypoints that must be reached on the way to full military disengagement. By announcing a timeline, vague as it is, it does put the question of sustainability into context.

Ultimately the British Armed Forces can sustain current operations in Iraq up to the end of 2006 and probably for some time beyond. However there will be no success in Iraq until we move beyond the concept of a solely military solution. It requires a far more diverse approach than is currently being implemented. The sort of deep understanding of political, social and military options that was such a success in Malaya and Northern Ireland is not evident today in Iraq. The military cannot solve the problems of Iraq on their own, and expecting soldiers to be micro-economists, sociologists and legal experts whilst carrying out their regular tasks may have become a necessity but should not be seen as a planning option.

The question of sustainability also needs to consider other factors. Whereas the military may be able to endure the commitment and rigours of continued operations in Iraq, the pressures upon the government by public

opinion may not be sustainable. As we have already seen in Europe, in particular with Spain, governments may bow to pressure from their electorate and their commitment to a coalition is by no-means a promise of perpetual involvement.

As we have seen there are many historical parallels and experiences for the British Armed forces to draw upon when combating the insurgency in Iraq. However there are no parallels to draw upon when dealing with the pressure, power and influence of international media on the perception of the situation in Iraq. The media almost have the power to make Iraq a success or a complete failure. It is the media and public opinion at home that will decide whether Britain's commitment to Iraq is sustainable and not their inherent capability. ■

*The views expressed are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute or its members.*

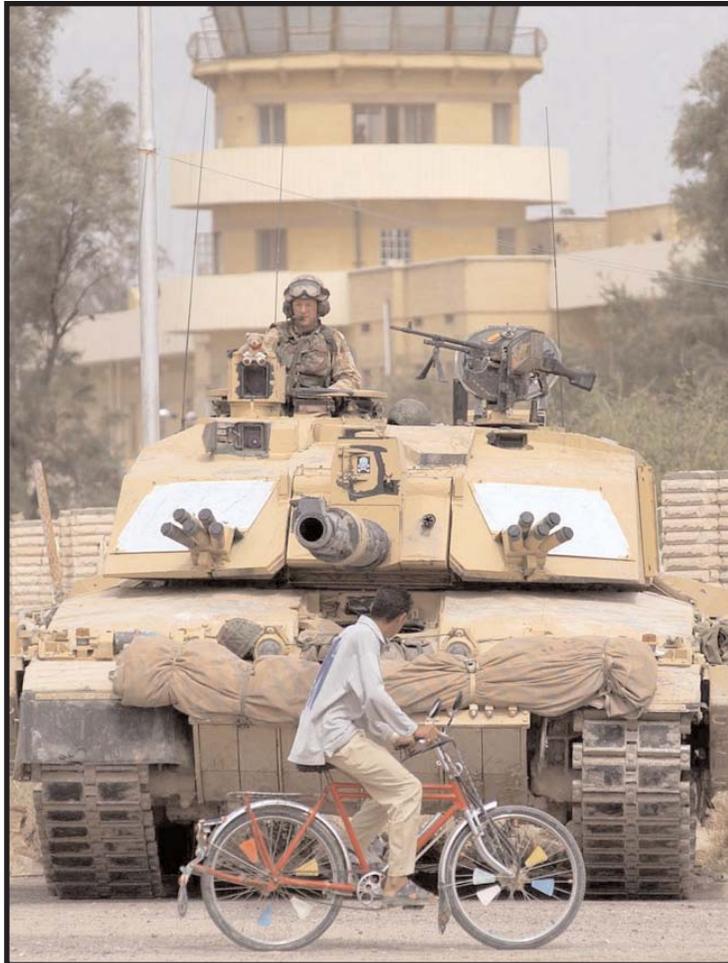


Photo Credit: UK Ministry of Defence

*A Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank (MBT) from the Queen's Royal Lancers in Basrah, Iraq.*

# PREPARING FOR THE FAILURE OF DETERRENCE

by Hans M. Kristensen

The disclosure in September 2005 in *Arms Control Today*<sup>1</sup> and the *Washington Post*<sup>2</sup> that the Pentagon was preparing an update of its nuclear doctrine to include preemptive strikes with nuclear weapons caught many by surprise. Such a mission has been hotly debated in the United States over the last several years in connection with the Pentagon's plans to develop the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (RNEP) and other Advanced Concept weapons, a debate that recently forced the Pentagon to withdraw the RNEP from next year's defence budget.

The update of the doctrine, officially known as *Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations* (Joint Publication 3-12), was scheduled for completion on August 15, 2005, but was derailed by the widespread attention to the disclosure. Defence officials now say that they are "reassessing" the doctrine and that the final product will certainly not contain the contentious sections that have received so much attention, if the document will be published at all. The reassessment also involves thinking about why the Pentagon has such a doctrine at all, the officials say. To underscore the sensitivity of the doctrine, the Pentagon recently removed the *existing* version of the doctrine from its website ten years after it was first made available to the public.<sup>3</sup>

Overseas the disclosure prompted reactions from allies as well as adversaries. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov warned against lowering the threshold for use of nuclear weapons. "Such plans do not limit, but in fact promote efforts by others to develop (nuclear weapons)," he said and added that he hoped US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld would inform him if such a change to the US military doctrine was planned.<sup>4</sup> In Germany the disclosure triggered condemnation from across the political spectrum,<sup>5</sup> and the North Korean *Minju Joson* newspaper said the new doctrine "is of an increasingly belligerent and offensive nature" and added that North Korea's "self-defensive deterrent [is] strong enough to protect the national dignity and security from the US nuclear threat."<sup>6</sup>

In the US Senate the disclosure prompted the Senate Armed Services Committee to summon the Pentagon to brief them on the doctrine. The Pentagon refused, claiming there is no doctrine to brief on since it has not yet been approved and published. Instead, half a dozen Senators intend to contact the President directly and ask him to intervene.

But why does a nuclear doctrine containing preemption cause such consternation in a nuclear weapon state that has had preemption in its nuclear war plans since the 1960s? After all, first

strikes formed an important element of Cold War deterrence of the Soviet Union.

The answer is probably a combination of surprise and genuine concern over how the Bush administration is changing US nuclear weapons policy. Unlike its predecessor from 1995, the draft revision of *Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations* identifies four situations (emphasis added) where preemptive use might occur:

- An adversary *intending to use WMD* (weapons of mass destruction) against US, multinational, or allies forces or civilian populations;
- *Imminent attack* from adversary biological weapons that only effects from nuclear weapons can safely destroy;
- Attacks on adversary installations including WMD, deep, hardened bunkers containing chemical or biological weapons or the command and control infrastructure *required for the adversary to execute* a WMD attack against United States or its friends and allies;
- *To demonstrate* U.S. intent and capability to use nuclear weapons to deter adversary use of WMD.

Not only are the scenarios vague, but the first three are striking in that they have little to do with deterrence based on last resort but everything to do with good old nuclear warfighting scenarios where nuclear weapons are just another tool in the toolbox. That is a far cry from the pledge that President George W. Bush made in 2001 to *reduce* the role of nuclear weapons. Instead he appears to have deepened a commitment to some of the most troubling aspects of the nuclear warfighting mentality that symbolized the Cold War.

Combined with an unambiguous endorsement of the use of nuclear weapons to deter and defeat not only nuclear forces but also other forms of weapons of mass destruction, these characteristics result in a revised doctrine that strongly *reaffirms* an aggressive nuclear posture of modernized nuclear weapons maintained on high alert.

## Preparing for Deterrence Failure

The doctrine itself is only the tip of the iceberg. The revised *Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations* follows on the heels of a series of important new guidance documents issued by the Bush administration over the last four years that significantly change the role of US nuclear weapons. As such, the doctrine's significance has less to do with setting new policy but more to do with

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*US Strategic Command has been assigned the new mission of 'Global Strike,' which would complement its emphasis on lethality and speed (symbolized by the 'lightning bolts').*

capturing what the policy has become.

In September 2002, less than a year after completion of the *Nuclear Posture Review* (NPR) in December 2001, President George W. Bush signed National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 17, "National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction." The document states that the United States will make clear that it reserves the right to respond with overwhelming force – including potentially nuclear weapons – to the use of [weapons of mass destruction] against the United States, our forces abroad, and friends and allies."

NSPD-17 was strongly influenced by the events on September 11, 2001, and set in motion a military transition that – instead of ensuring deterrence – centers on the expectation that deterrence *will fail*. Although the focus of NSPD-17 is conventional forces, this has also fundamentally changed the intended role of nuclear weapons from reactive to proactive. Granted, nuclear weapons are still intended to serve in the traditional retaliatory role as well as a last resort, but the expectation of deterrence failure has resulted in a "new kind of deterrence" that requires the development of new strike plans that are deliberately offensive and preemptive.

The most prominent example of this is Global Strike, a new mission assigned to Strategic Command (STRATCOM) in January 2003 in Change 2 to the Unified Command Plan. The directive identifies Global Strike as "a capability to deliver rapid, extended range, precision kinetic (nuclear and conventional) and non-kinetic (elements of space and information operations) effects in support of theater and national objectives."<sup>7</sup>

Also known as CONPLAN (Contingency Plan) 8022, Global Strike envisions using nuclear (and conventional) forces to strike, preemptively if necessary, targets anywhere on the globe in a crisis. CONPLAN 8022 complements other nuclear strike plans (OPLAN 8044, formerly SIOP) and regional plans, but is distinct from them by its focus on prompt responses to crises and destruction of time-urgent targets that are not covered in the other deliberate plans.

CONPLAN 8022 is focused on strikes against "rogue" states (e.g., North Korea, Iran, and Syria) and non-state actors. The belief of the Bush administration that the threat from these adversaries is imminent prompted Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in

spring of 2004 to issue an "Alert Order" that directed the Pentagon to activate CONPLAN 8022.

In response, the Air Force and Navy drew up strike sorties and attack profiles for their operational nuclear forces to be ready to strike on short notice if ordered to do so by the president. "Global Strike operations will normally be executed within compressed timelines (from seconds to days)... from the continental United States and forward bases," according to the JCS Global Strike Joint Integrating Concept (JIC).

As a result, long-range bombers are now "essentially on alert" to execute CONPLAN 8022, according to the Air Force, partially reversing the decision in 1991 to remove bombers from alert status. Although the nuclear weapons are kept in their bunkers, the bomber wings periodically practice launching the aircraft in response to a Global Strike emergency order from the President. In 2004, for example, 13 B-52 bombers at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana were launched in a minimum-interval take-off, with each bomber taking off within a minute or less of one another. Said the 8th Air Force commander at the base: 8th Air Force is now "essentially on alert...to plan and execute Global Strikes" on behalf of STRATCOM.<sup>8</sup>

Likewise, strategic submarines on deterrent patrol in the Atlantic and Pacific are now tasked under CONPLAN 8022 to launch long-range Trident II D5 ballistic missiles preemptively, if ordered to do so, against targets in countries with weapons of mass destruction. To demonstrate the new mission, according to a high-ranking navy official, the USS Tennessee (SSBN-734) in March 2005 launched a Trident II D5 missile off Florida in the shortest trajectory ever flown by a sea-launched ballistic missile (1,200 nautical miles). Part of the objective of the launch was to see how fast a submarine could strike a target in a Global Strike mission. The short trajectory put the reentry vehicles on targets only 12-15 minutes after launch.<sup>9</sup>

### Conclusion

The disclosure of a revised *Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations* resulted in widespread condemnation of the Pentagon's preemptive nuclear strike planning. Yet the doctrine is only the tip of an iceberg in the Bush administration's efforts to create a "new deterrence" that incorporates some of the most troubling aspects of Cold War nuclear planning.

Rather than following through on its earlier promises to *reduce* the role of nuclear weapons, terrorism and proliferation appear to have spooked the Bush administration into creating new nuclear missions that are so offensive that they threaten to set the United States on a path that will demand the use of nuclear weapons sooner or later. This use could be triggered not by attacks from other major nuclear powers that threaten the survival of the nation, but by small (although still serious) attacks from non-nuclear weapon states.

This is a monumental development that has profound implications for US policy, international security, NATO nuclear poli-

cy, and the direction of post-Cold War arms control and non-proliferation. In the United States, one would at least hope that the considerable interest created by the revised doctrine will result in Congress beginning to pay much more attention to the development of the Global Strike mission, which in its extreme form could look like this hypothetical headline in the *Washington Post*: "U.S. attacks Iran with nuclear weapons. Bush says: 'Trust me, they were about to attack.'" ■

### Notes:

1. Hans M. Kristensen, "The Role of Nuclear Weapons: New Doctrine Falls Short of Bush Pledge," *Arms Control Today*, vol. 35, n. 7 (September 2005), p. x, available at [http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2005\\_09/Kristensen.asp](http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2005_09/Kristensen.asp).
2. Walter Pincus, "Pentagon Revises Nuclear Strike Plan," *Washington Post*, September 11, 2005, p. A1.
3. The draft doctrine and all previous versions are available at the Nuclear Information Project at <http://www.nukestrat.com/us/jcs/jp.htm>.
4. "Russia Warns U.S. Against New Doctrine," *Reuters* (Berlin), September 14, 2005.
5. "Alle Parteien alarmiert," *N-TV Newsletter*, September 13, 2005 (at 16:26).
6. "North Korea Denounces Draft US Policy On Nuclear Weapons," *SpaceWar.com* (AFP), September 25, 2005.
7. William M. Arkin and Hans M. Kristensen, "Global Strike: Preparing for Nuclear Battlefields in the Post-9/11 Era" (tentative), Natural Resources Defense Council/Federation of American Scientists, forthcoming.
8. William M. Arkin, "Not Just A Last Resort," *Washington Post*, May 15, 2005, p. B1.
9. Personal conversation.

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*Continued from page 6*

devices. They do not, as a rule, field modern armoured forces, so from where does the requirement for extra-long-range direct fire originate? Nor do they have unmanned air vehicles or cruise missiles, let alone air forces. So from where does the requirement for ground-based air defence originate?

Put simply, if the DPS has read the strategic landscape correctly, then the MMEV is clearly surplus to requirements. However, if the army insists on keeping the MMEV, if it considers low-level air defence and extra-long-range direct-fire support to be "core capabilities," then the defence statement's assessment of the threat is wrong! Either way, the implications for army transformation are grave.

The MMEV represents an admirable effort to squeeze the last drop of performance out of sunk costs. But equipment choices should only be made after carefully measuring capability and costs against recent operational experience and future needs. This seems not to have been the case with the MMEV. The sys-

tem has won no foreign orders, nor does it have any prospect of doing so. Inter-operability with key allies will not be enhanced by its acquisition. The vehicle is meant for tasks that need not be undertaken, given the opposition Canadian troops are expected to face in the future. It offers only incremental improvements to the army's other direct fire support platforms, and is likely the most expensive way of neutralizing ground targets. Finally, it will offer no strategic mobility improvements over its tracked predecessor.

A \$750-million project that does not serve the purposes envisioned for the army in the Defence Policy Statement, and which does not provide substantial return on investment cannot in all good conscience be allowed to proceed. A vehicle that clearly meant for symmetrical operations is not consistent with army transformation, and has no place in the CF inventory in the era of fourth-generation warfare. ■

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# THE RUSTED "VIKING" LIVES AGAIN: THE STRANGE TALE OF A FORMER SOVIET AIRCRAFT CARRIER

by Sunil Ram

The rusted hulk of the never-completed Soviet era aircraft carrier *Varyag* (Viking)<sup>1</sup> had been quietly rusting away at the Dalian Shipyard in Liaoning Province in northern China since 2002. Suddenly in April of 2005, she was moved into dry dock for a major refit, yet Zhang Guangqin, the vice-minister of the Commission of Science Technology and Industry for National Defense, and the official who oversees China's shipbuilding industry, denied at a Beijing news briefing on June 16, 2005 that China was building an aircraft carrier.<sup>2</sup> The story of the *Varyag* is a tale of deception as to the role this old Cold Warrior will play in the coming decade. She is now in the hands of China and is being refitted by the People's Liberation Army's Navy (PLAN). Ultimately, her presence could tip the regional balance of power further in favor of China.

The *Varyag's* odyssey began in the shipyards of Soviet dominated Ukraine. She was originally to be called the *Riga*, but due to demonstrations in the city in the late 1980s, the name was changed to *Varyag*. She was destined to become a 67,500-ton *Kuznetsov*-class conventionally powered aircraft carrier. *Varyag* was the sister ship of the *Admiral Flota Svetskogo Soyuza Kuznetsov* (formally *Tbilisi*) which was launched in 1985 and became fully operational in 1995. The *Admiral Kuznetsov*, it should be noted, is presently the only operational carrier in the Russian fleet. The last *Kiev*-class carrier, the *Admiral Gorshkov*, which was in service with the Northern Fleet, has been sold to India, where it will go into service around 2008. *Varyag* was launched in 1988, but was never completed. There has been some confusion over the class of ship as it has been changed a number of times. Based on NATO code names, sometimes the ships were referred to as the "Brezhnev" Class. Originally the class was des-



*The Varyag aircraft carrier under tow to China.*

igned the "Black-Com-2" Class (Black Sea Combatant 2), then the "Kremlin" Class, and finally the "Kuznetsov" Class – which is what they are known by today.

The *Kuznetsov*-class carriers were developed as a response to the US Navy's predominance in blue-water naval capability.<sup>3</sup> However, it is clear that the class was designed for a defensive role, specifically in support for their ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) force. The lack of a catapult launch system also means there is an inability to launch aircraft with heavy strike packages, in addition to the fact that the air wing is clearly oriented towards an air superiority role.<sup>4</sup> The *Kuznetsov*-class has an upward sloped bow with a twelve-degree "ski jump," which allows for short-take-offs.

The *Varyag* was never completed; construction was stopped in 1992, as Russia could not afford to pay Ukraine to complete the vessel. She remained in the Nikolayev South shipyard in Ukraine until the Chinese made an offer to buy her in 1992. At the time the *Varyag* had limited electronics and no rudder or engines. The deal failed as the Chinese government could not come to an agreement with Ukraine. In 1995 a US satellite flyby showed that the ship's ammunition elevator was open. This may have damaged her interior due to exposure to the elements.

In 1998 she was put up for auction and was sold for US\$20 million to a company called Chong Lot Travel Agency. The price

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was nearly three times the scrap value of similar sized ships. Ostensibly Chong Lot was going to convert the *Varyag* into a "floating casino" in Macau. On the surface this did not seem unreasonable, as other Chinese companies had previously purchased two 45,000-ton *Kiev*-class carriers, the *Kiev* and the *Minsk*, which were turned into "floating tourism parks" based in Shenzhen and Tianjin respectively. The *Minsk*, however, was scrapped while the *Kiev* was converted into a museum. But both ships were first given a thorough going over by PLAN naval engineers. This was also not the only time China has tried to acquire aircraft carriers.

The decommissioned Australian aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne (originally the HMS Majestic) was sold in February 1985 to China United Shipbuilding Company for US\$1.4 million. She was finally broken up nearly a decade later in Dalian in 1994, but only after having her flight deck used for training and extensive visits from PLAN naval architects and engineers. China had also tried to acquire the decommissioned nuclear-capable French aircraft carrier Clemenceau. In February 1995 Spanish shipbuilder Empresa Nacional Bazan had offered to build China a low-cost, lightweight conventional-takeoff-and-landing (CTOL) carrier; however, China seemed more interested in acquiring the

blueprints rather than the ship and the deal fell through. Furthermore, in November 2002 Hong Kong-based HK Jiexin Shipping bought the decommissioned Brazilian aircraft carrier Minas Gerais (ex-HMS Vengeance) for US\$2 million. Again the claim was the ship was to be converted into a museum with shops and a bar. However, the bid was rescinded before the company took delivery of the ship, and the Minas Gerais was eventually scrapped in 2005 in India.

From the beginning, the 1998 plan of converting the *Varyag* into a "floating casino" was suspect at best. Given that Macao was still controlled by Portugal, Chong Lot required Portuguese permission and licenses for the project. But as it turned out (a) Chong Lot was refused permission to anchor the *Varyag* due to lack of adequate paperwork, and in fact the company had never even applied for a license to operate a casino in the enclave; (b) Macao's coastal waters are simply too shallow to allow a ship with *Varyag's* draught to anchor; and (c) Chong Lot did not even have offices in Macao, though it apparently was registered there.

What was revealed was that Chong Lot was a subsidiary of a Hong Kong based firm called Chinluck (Holding) Co. Ltd. Three of the five Chinluck directors had ties to the PLAN and were from Shandong, which is where the PLAN's North Sea Fleet



is based. Also two of Chong Lot's directors were former PLAN officers. Chinluck representatives denied any PLAN involvement. The company did not have assets and, for all purposes, was a paper company that quietly folded in 2003. In August of 1999, Goldspot Investments, a Hong Kong based company, became the majority shareholder of Chong Lot. One of Goldspot's directors had an address directly inside a Beijing military compound. What is more compelling about the PLAN link is that Goldspot's majority shareholder is China Securities International Ltd, which is a large state-owned brokerage house. Finally, the fact that Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Yang Wenchang's visit to Ankara in September 2001 – which in part involved a deal of some US\$360 million in Chinese economic aid and tourism to Turkey – led to the *Varyag* eventually being allowed passage through the Dardanelles in November, further attests to high level government involvement in the acquisition of aircraft carrier technology. Turkey had initially blocked the *Varyag's* passage claiming the ship posed various "hazards" to Turkey.<sup>5</sup>

Egypt was also offered the same incentives as Turkey to allow passage of the *Varyag* through the Suez Canal, though Cairo refused the Chinese offer. It is estimated that the cost of towing the *Varyag* to Dalian, which is China's most advanced shipyard that specializes in large-tonnage military and civilian vessel, was at least US\$10 million, bringing the cost of the ship to over US\$30 million. *Varyag* after its fifteen-month towing odyssey eventually reached Dalian in 2002. Since being dry-docked, the *Varyag's* hull has been sandblasted and the superstructure has been rebuilt to the ship's original configuration. The site is heavily guarded and a number of high-ranking Government officials have been to the worksite. This begs the obvious question of what are the Chinese up to with the *Varyag*?

When putting the present situation surrounding the apparent refit of the *Varyag* in context, it is clear that China is continuing to pursue its ambitions for a blue-water naval capability. On closer analysis, it is also clear that China's acquisition of old aircraft carriers is designed to allow for some reverse engineering of the technology. The cost to China to develop a full-blown blue-water capability is high and time consuming, and for the immediate future unrealistic economically, but the rehabilitation of one ship could provide a good training platform or even a short-range coastal naval air or helicopter assault capability. In addition, the ability to utilize aircraft carriers will greatly tip the military balance in the favour of China in its long-term goal of reuniting with Taiwan through either the use of political pressure or military coercion.

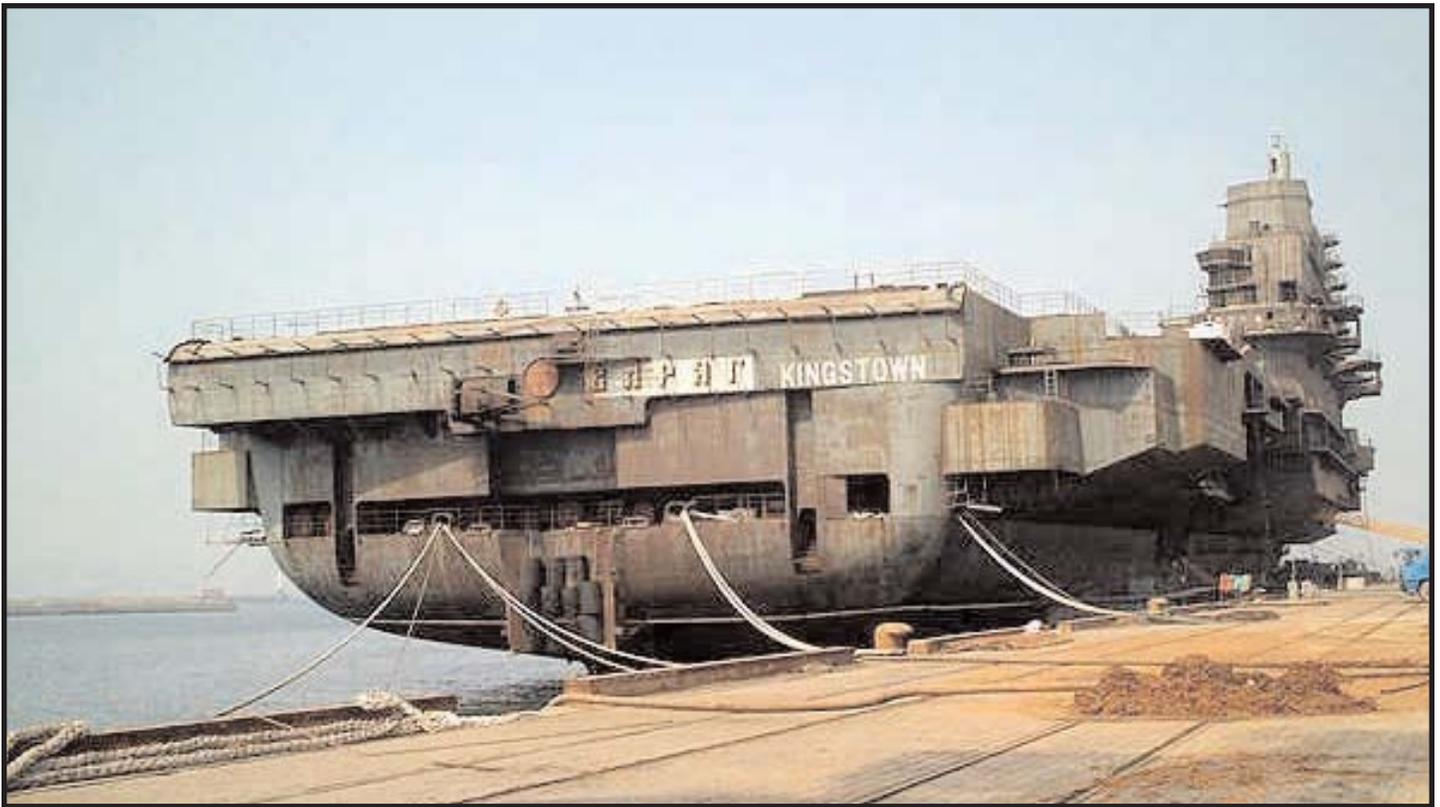
Given that the People's Liberation Army's Air Force (PLAAF) has purchased the Sukhoi Su-30MKK<sup>6</sup> "Flanker", which is a multi-role all-weather attack fighter, and the PLAN has received 24 advanced naval versions of this fighter (the Sukhoi Su-30MK2 "Flanker's") from Russia, it is clear that there is a possible military doctrinal change occurring in China. Admiral Liu Huaqing Liu, the father of China's aircraft carrier research and development (R&D) program, believes that the PLAN had to

obtain aircraft carriers to obtain "blue water" capability for the future. Just prior to his retirement in 1997 Admiral Liu argued that it was "extremely necessary" for China to have aircraft carriers in order for China to maintain maritime sovereignty over resources, trading sea lanes, and strategically important regions like the Strait of Taiwan and the South China Sea. He ultimately felt that this capability was required to keep up with regional powers such as India and Japan, and to allow the PLAN to have a decisive advantage in future naval warfare.<sup>7</sup> *Jane's Defense Weekly* recently noted "that PLAN technicians have also conducted thorough studies of the basic structure of the *Varyag* during the past few years to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the carrier's structural design."<sup>8</sup>

China's current maritime doctrine has two models: (1) the independent employment of naval power, where the PLAN is to project power far from home waters; and (2) joint operations with other services, especially with the PLA, in primarily defense roles in littoral waters and an offensive role supporting amphibious landings.<sup>9</sup> In both models, one requires aircraft carrier support of some kind. And an aircraft carrier requires a supporting task force if it is to survive in modern naval warfare.

On this latter point, China has clearly been developing the naval capacity for the protection of major warships. Dalian Shipyard is currently building new air-defence missile destroyers (DDG), the first *Lanzhou*-class (pennant number 170) Type 052C DDG was launched on 28 December 2004. The *Haikou*-class (pennant number 171) DDG was launched on 30 October 2003 and entered service in late 2005. Apart from a few sensors, the Type 052C is completely based on indigenous technology. These two new DDGs will be in service with the two existing Type 052B's that went into service in the summer of 2004 and the single Type 051B *Luhai* class DDG armed with the short-range HHQ-7 SAMs and the two Type 051Cs. Furthermore, in 1996 the PLAN acquired two *Sovremenny*-class destroyers (DDG-Type 956E) from Russia that were originally built for the Soviet Navy. China also signed a US\$1 billion contract with Russia in January 2002, to acquire two more of these ships, which will be delivered in late 2005 and early 2006. In combination with an aircraft carrier, these ships give the PLAN the ability to project naval power beyond China's traditional territorial waters.

Moreover the PLAN has had the training ship *Shichang*, its first air-capable vessel, in service since 1997. The *Shichang* looks like a smaller version of the Royal Navy's Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) Argus aviation training and primary casualty reception ship, and allows the PLAN to train in large ship handling and flight deck operations. *Shichang* also provides the PLAN with a multi-purpose naval air platform that can provide limited air support or support helicopters for anti-submarine operations, minesweeping or Special Forces insertion. There are also reports indicating that China has reconfigured some military runways to simulate an aircraft carrier deck for flight deck landing operations and that PLAN officers are being trained in large ship handling and flight deck operations.



Taken as individual items, the preceding ship acquisitions and actions by the PLAN do not amount to much. But taken in their entirety it is clear that the PLAN has laid long-term plans that are now coming to fruition in regards to developing naval air capability. They have the support ships, they have in the *Varyag* (a workable training platform if not a fully operational aircraft carrier), and therefore it is now merely a question of when China will have a fully functioning aircraft carrier flotilla. Once this is achieved, the military balance of power will fundamentally change in the seas and oceans of Asia.

Taiwan will no longer have military superiority with China, India and Japan will have to consider upgrading their own blue-water capabilities and Indonesia will have to follow suit. In short the presence of a Chinese aircraft carrier could trigger a mini regional arms race centered on naval capabilities. In turn the reality of a fully functional naval air capability may turn out to be the coercive force China requires to compel Taiwan back into Beijing's sphere of control. As Sun Pin, the great grandson of Sun Tzu, observed in *Military Methods*, "if you implement the Tao of arising, then (even) Heaven and Earth [will not be able to obstruct you]."<sup>10</sup> So is it with the PLAN and their long-term thinking about naval air capability. ■

#### Notes:

1. The Varangians or Variags were Scandinavians who traveled eastwards, mainly from Sweden. Promoting trade, piracy and mercenary militarism, they roamed the river systems and portages of what later became Russia, reaching the Caspian Sea and Constantinople. Today we call them Vikings.

2. "Building Aircraft Carrier in Shanghai Denied," *Xinhua News Agency*, June 17, 2005.

3. The ship is armed with 12 VLS P-500/SS-N-19 Granit/Shipwreck ship-to-ship missiles (SSM); 24 Kinzhal Vertical Launching Systems (VLS) with 192- 9M-330/SA-N-9 Gauntlet surface-to-air missiles (SAM); 8 combined air defense systems (CADS-N-1/Kortik) Close-In Weapons System (CIWS) comprised of 256 9M-311/SA-N-11 Grison SAM and 1 dual 30 mm CIWS per mount; 6- 30 mm anti-aircraft (AA) guns; and 2 RPK-5/UDAV-1 Liven anti-torpedo RL integrated anti-submarine warfare system with 60 anti-submarine rockets.

4. The fixed-wing air wing assets could include 12 navalized Sukhoi Su-27K "Flanker" (now the Su-33) or Mikoyan and Gurevich MiG-29K "Fulcrum-D's" and 16 Yakovlev Yak-141 (formerly the Yak-41M) "Freestyle." The class can also carry the navalized Sukhoi Su-25 "Frogfoot." The helicopter assets were also oriented to a defensive role; they can include four Kamov Ka-27 LD, 18 Kamov Ka-27 PLO and two Ka-27 S "Helix" anti-submarine and search and rescue helicopters.

5. An interesting historical aside to why Turkey initially blocked the passage of the *Varyag* goes back to the 1936 Montreaux Convention, which prohibits the passage of "aircraft carriers" through the Dardanelles. In an attempt to get around this the Soviets (when translated from Russian) called their aircraft carriers "aviation cruisers" or "aircraft-carrying cruisers." Given that traditionally carriers were built in the Black Sea, the choice of their designation was more than just semantics.

6. Mnogafunktionali Kommerchal Kitayski meaning Multifunctional Commercial for China.

7. "The Chinese Navy and Aircraft Carriers." *Zhongguo Haiyang Bao*, State Oceanography Bureau, 1997. Cited in Ian Storey & You Ji. "China's aircraft carrier ambitions: seeking truth from rumors," *Naval War College Review*, vol. LVII, n. 1 (Winter 2004).

8. Yihong Chang & Andrew Koch. "Is China building a carrier?" *Jane's Defense Weekly*, August 12, 2005.

9. Yan Youqiang, Zhang Dexin, and Lei Huajian, "The impact on the PLAN campaigns of the developmental trend of the maritime campaigns," in *Selected Papers of the PLA's First Conference on Campaign Theory: Exploring the ways to victory*, ed. The Editor Group (Beijing: PLA Publishing House, 1987), pp. 993-95.

9. Sun Pin, *Military Methods*, translated by R.L. Sawyer (Westview Press, Oxford, 1995), p. 192.

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