

Sending in event column cut locally. Please return, no haste. I have several interests, including this new definition of "defensive" as compared with "offensive" weapons, a trigger in Cuba Missile Crisis and contrived US posture. HW 1/28/73

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... For the U.S., a Shift Away From

NOW THAT the fighting is over in Vietnam, the military strategists are quietly shifting their attention from land wars to sea wars. One strategy paper bluntly suggests that "the qualities of a war at sea may permit our government to retain more public support than would be accorded another land war of attrition" as in Vietnam.

President Nixon is his secret guidelines to the National Security Council had emphasized the lesson of Vietnam. Hereafter, the United States may furnish military aid but not combat troops to help an ally fight off a Communist takeover.

In keeping with his new strategy, he has decreed that the Army should be streamlined into a compact, modern force trained to meet the demands of the nuclear age. A sweeping reorganization has already been ordered.

But the Navy, sensing the revulsion to ground wars that has grown out of the Vietnam experience, has been suggesting that the next war may be fought entirely at sea. The admirals have argued that the United States and the Soviet Union, now close to a nuclear standoff, might well have their next military confrontation at sea. As they see it, neither superpower is willing to risk nuclear catastrophe by being the first to strike on land, and both will begin maneuvering for supremacy at sea. Already, the Soviets have given top priority to the construction of modern naval craft, both warships and submarines. In the past, these vessels have been designed and deployed largely to protect the Soviet coastline.

But Russia is now building a large aircraft carrier, capable of operating around the world. The presumption is that it will be the first of several.

THE SEA WAR possibility has stimulated some heavily classified contingency planning in the Pentagon. The strategists have recommended moving more missiles aboard submarines, as our land-based missiles become increasingly vulnerable to more accurate warheads. By concentrating more military power at sea, they hope to move the devastation of a possible nuclear attack away from land targets.

The energy crisis has also increased U.S. dependence on overseas fuel sources. The strategists have called for greater seapower, therefore, to protect the fuel shipments.

The "sea war" concept was raised as early as 1971 by the Center for Naval Analyses. In a paper circulated among naval strategists, Dr. Desmond Wilson and Cmdr. Nicholas Brown contend: "Though war is never an attractive option, especially for a democratic state, the possibility of armed conflict with the Soviet Union cannot realistically be discounted: The qualities of a war at sea may permit our government to retain more public support than would be accorded another land war of attrition."

The strategists have had some difficulty, however, portraying the Soviet fleet as a global menace. While it's true that Soviet warships are beginning to show up on all seven seas and missile-carrying submarines have been

tracked in U.S. waters, the secret estimates still depict the Soviet Navy essentially as a defensive force. Even the new aircraft carriers, if many are built, won't be a match for American carriers for years to come. It will take long training and experience for them to equal U.S. carrier operations.

The Soviets have made it clear, meanwhile, they won't sign another arms limitation agreement which doesn't include carrier-based planes. They look upon the U.S. carrier forces as strategic weapons, which threaten the Russian homeland. The U.S. negotiators will argue that the carrier-based planes are intended strictly to support a conventional ground war. But even as they make this argument in Geneva, the thinking inside the Pentagon is changing.

THIS POST-VIETNAM military planning is almost sure to touch off another interservice feud, as the rival services squabble for the declining defense dollars.

The Air Force is already spreading the word that sea-based planes, taking into account the cost of their support, cost four times as much as land-based planes. In answer to the Navy's argument that carriers are mobile, the Air Force contends that a prefabricated airfield can be flown into an area and set up within three days. The taxpayers can buy dozens of these prefab fields for the price of a single carrier.

The Army, because of the de-emphasis on ground troops, is also eager to grow more wings. Indeed the generals

Land Wars

used Vietnam as a testing ground to demonstrate how effective their gunships and armed helicopters could be. We have seen classified Pentagon reports suggesting that lives were sometimes risked to test new air-ground battle tactics. One purpose of the tests was to justify more planes and helicopters for the Army. In other words, men actually died in Vietnam on the altar of interservice rivalry, as the Army sought to win an advantage over the Air Force.

WITH THE WAR over in Vietnam, scare stories can also be expected to justify high military spending. Already, the outgoing CIA director, Richard Helms, has warned the Senate Armed Services Committee behind closed doors that China is on the verge of becoming a superpower in intercontinental missiles.

It's true that China has built about a dozen nuclear missiles. The first few already have been targeted against Soviet cities. Helms didn't mention, however, that the United States has developed a defense against Chinese warheads. The CIA obtained samples of the metal that the Chinese use in their warheads. Our own nuclear experts then constructed duplicates of the Chinese warheads. These were defonated underground in Nevada with X-rays from an adjoining nuclear explosion.

Clearly, the maneuvering over the post-Vietnam military budget has already started.