TRADE

DISTRIBUTION OF U.K. MERCHANT SHIPS (typical day)

700 at Sea - 600 in port.

120 Ocean going ships arrive in W. Europe and discharge 1 million tons of cargo each day.

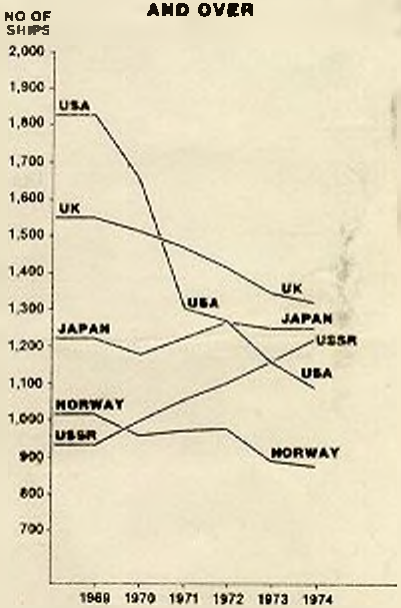
PRINCIPAL MERCHANT FLEETS 1975 (Thousands D.W.T.)

		% World Total
LIBERIA	103.687	21.4
JAPAN	60,785	12.5
UK	49,604	10.2
NORWAY	42,600	8.8
GREECE	35,833	7.4
USA	19,931	4.1
PANAMA	17,455	3.6
USSR	15,283	3.2

DWT = Weight of Cargo, Stores and Bunker Fuel

(Chamber of Shipping)

MERCHANT SHIPS OF 4000 GRT AND OVER



GRT = Volume of Ships Enclosed Spaces

(Lloyds)

U.K. IMPORTS OF PRINCIPAL RAW MATERIALS - 1974/5

	VALUE £M	% OF U.K. REQUIREMENT
PETROLEUM	4533	98
FOOD	3245	45
IRON AND STEEL	717	63
TIMBER	590	88
ANIMAL FOOD	127	47

U.K. EXPORTS - 1974 analysis by destination

W Europe, EEC & EFTA	50%
N America	16%
Latin America	3%
USSR & E Europe	3%
Rest of the World	28%

Total Value: £16,494M

(Overseas Trade Statistics)

ENERGY

SOURCES OF UK ENERGY PRODUCTION - 1974/75

Imported Petroleum	45%
Coal	35%
Natural Gas	16%
Nuclear/Hydroelectric	4%

(Dept of Energy)

ESTIMATED UK PETROLEUM REQUIREMENTS

(millions of tons/annum)

	1975	1977	1980
Total requirement	115	125	135
Available offshore	5	50	115
To be imported	110	75	20

(Dept of Energy)

MONEY

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE 1974/75

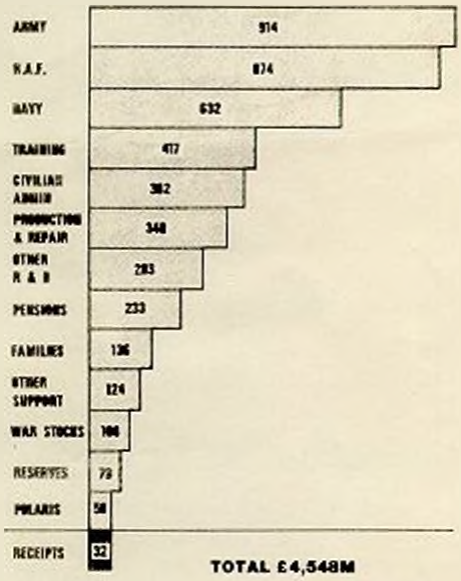
The make up of each £1 of public spending

Public expenditure last year was about £39,000 million.

The diagram shows the make-up of each £1 of public spending last year.

(Personal Tax Papers)

DEFENCE ESTIMATES 1975/76 (£ MILLIONS)



TOTAL £4,548M

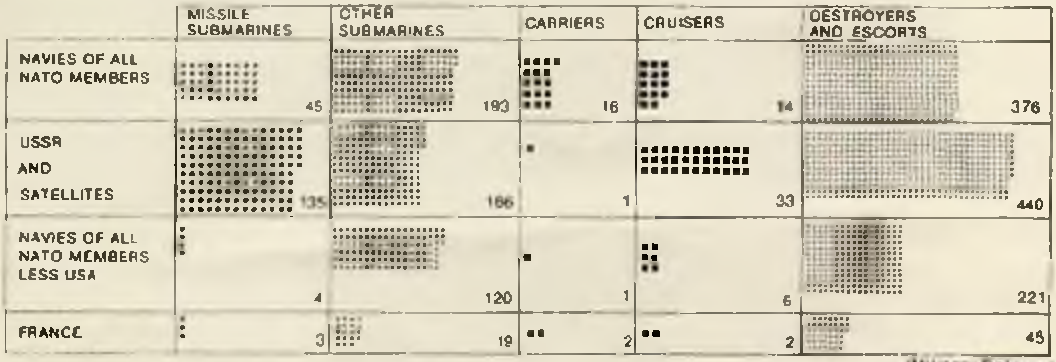
(Defence White Paper)

COMPARISONS

FLEET STRENGTHS - 1974/75

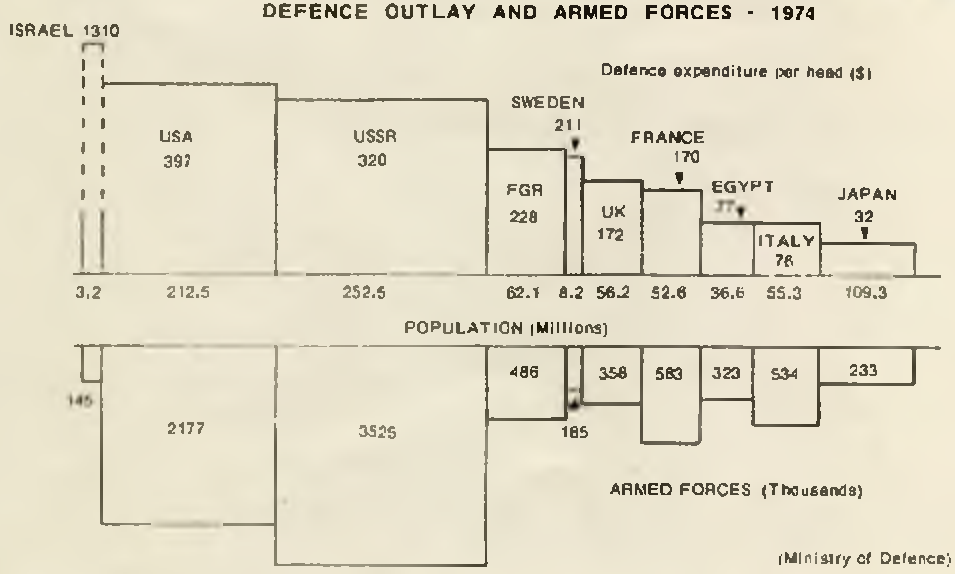
	UK	USA	USSR	CHINA	FRG	ITALY	FRANCE	JAPAN
Missile Submarines	4N	41N	90N & 45	1	–	–	3N	–
Other Submarines	8N & 22	61N & 12	30N & 150	50	24	9	19	15
Fixed Wing Carriers	1	2N & 13	1	–	–	–	2	–
Helicopter Carriers	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Cruisers	2	1N & 7	33	–	–	3	2	–
Amphibious Ships	2	65	100	40	–	2	7	4
Destroyers/Escorts	67	4N & 151	188	17	22	20	45	43
Coastal Escorts	–	–	158	35	11	11		20
MCM Vessels	45	91	260	27	57	61	46	43
Missile Boats	–	2	130	100	14	3	1	–
MTB's/MGB's Patrol Craft	13	14	325	545	26	11	14	5
Landing Craft	57	100	100	225	22	72	14	48

Note: N Nuclear Powered.



(Military Balance)

DEFENCE OUTLAY AND ARMED FORCES - 1974



(Ministry of Defence)

SOVIET NAVAL EXPANSION

SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITY - Typical Deployments

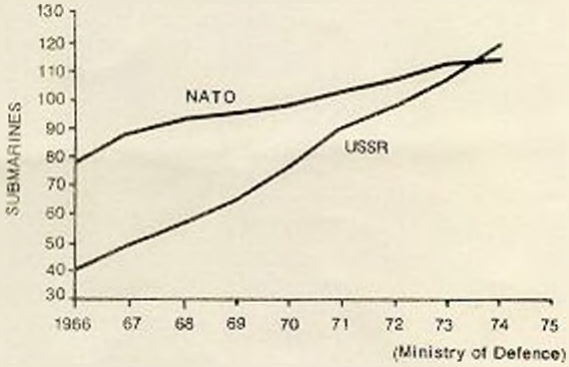
MAXIMUM SOVIET DEPLOYMENT
On any one occasion

	1962	1966	1971	1973	1975
Atlantic	10	25	55	25	89
Mediterranean	10	35	55	96	49
Pacific & Indian Ocean		10	40	45	67
TOTAL	20	70	150	166	205

(including Auxiliaries)

(Ministry of Defence)

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF NUCLEAR SUBMARINES



(Ministry of Defence)

The Warsaw Pact's building rate for nuclear-powered submarines, almost one per month, is twice that of NATO

INSTANCES OF THE USE OF BRITISH NAVAL FORCES SINCE 1945

1946	CORFU STRAITS
1946/47	PALESTINE
1948/49	CHINA
1950/53	KOREA
1951	GULF OF AQABA
1955/59	CYPRUS
1956	SUEZ
1958/59	ICELAND COD WAR
1961	KUWAIT
1962	BRITISH GUIANA
1962/66	CONFRONTATION WITH INDONESIA
1959/73	BAHAMAS PATROL
1964	TANZANIA
1966/75	BEIRA PATROL
1967/68	ADEN
1967/?	GIBRALTAR GUARDSHIP
1968	MAURITIUS
1969	ANGUILLA
1969/?	N. IRELAND
1973	ICELAND PATROL
1974	CYPRUS

(Ministry of Defence)

BRITISH SERVICE MANPOWER APRIL 1975

Royal Navy		66,056
Royal Marines		7678
WRNS		2769
QARNNS		698
TOTAL	ROYAL NAVY	76,200
	ARMY	167,100
	RAF	95,000
	TOTAL	338,300

(Ministry of Defence)

INTRODUCTION

I have great pleasure in welcoming you to this presentation on behalf of the Admiralty Board. The presentation is designed to give you a background about our Maritime interests and their Defence, against which we all – as citizens and taxpayers – must judge the need for a Navy. It is for you to draw your own conclusions, but I hope that what I tell you will help to make informed debate easier and more widespread. The formal part of my talk will include some specially made film sequences and will be followed by a question and answer period. After that my team and I will be delighted to continue the discussion informally.

In any country it is the Government's prime duty to ensure the safety of the state. In a Democracy this is a complex process because the people can choose how they wish to spend their money and there are many other claims on the national budget besides defence. Health, education, housing and the social services all need money desperately and no one would wish to spend more on defence than is necessary to safeguard our vital interests. To provide a basis for a judgement on what that level should be, let us start by looking at why we need Defence.

There are three main reasons why we need Armed Forces. Firstly, we must be able to preserve the security of the United Kingdom against external threats of any sort, and this we do in association with our NATO allies. Secondly, we need them to back up our foreign policy and to enhance the stable trading conditions on which our economic survival depends. Finally, we must have forces to act as an ultimate safeguard against threats such as terrorism.

Here you see the relative sizes of the forces which we have at the moment. Their roles are complementary, because effective deterrence depends on being able to influence action on land, sea and in the air.

Volunteer Forces and weapons are extremely expensive nowadays and this year our Defence Budget is £4550M. Since we can only spend on Defence what Parliament will vote us, we must justify the relevance of the forces and ensure that they are both highly efficient and good value for money in maintaining our vital interests. What are some of these interests and how might they be threatened?

We are a trading nation, a partner in a trading community; and as the oil crisis following the 1973 Middle East War sharply reminded us, we depend on countries overseas both for raw materials and for markets for our goods. A threat to either is, directly or indirectly, a threat to us. In parallel with these trading links and partly because of them we are also joined in a network of alliances and friendships. Again we could be involved if a part of this network is threatened.

None of this is new, Defence White Papers have said it for years, nevertheless there have been many changes from the traditional picture of Britain as a Major Power with world wide interests and responsibilities. We are members of the Atlantic Alliance and of the European Economic Community and we have important new interests close to the United Kingdom, notably North Sea oil and gas. Not only has our former imperial role finished but there has been a great shift of emphasis towards Europe and the North Atlantic. Thus changes of task for the Royal Navy have been inevitable and virtually none of our Fleet is now committed outside NATO. But let us be quite clear that the sea itself has not changed.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEA

The sea covers three-quarters of the Earth's surface and outside territorial waters it has no frontiers. It is a great international highway which can be used not only to carry trade and people but also to project power and influence for either peaceful or hostile motives. It gives access to any shore without violating land frontiers and may carry above, on, or beneath its surface, the means of crippling a nation by the destruction of its seaborne means of survival.

The sea is an immense source of natural wealth in its own right: food, protein, minerals, and fuel. For centuries mankind has fished the oceans and as an island nation we fish mainly to provide for our own domestic requirements. Our fishing takes place not only in inshore waters, the North Sea

and West of Scotland, but also in the distant waters of Iceland and Greenland. Only recently has the full potential of the seabed and what lies beneath it been appreciated. Quite suddenly the shallow waters of the Continental Shelf have assumed an entirely new importance, and modern technology will soon enable us to explore and exploit the deeper waters of the oceans.

In Britain's case, North Sea oil and gas are vital to us and it is unnecessary for me to emphasise the importance and value of these rigs and their associated pipelines. By most estimates, they could be helping to provide an annual credit of up to £2,000M to our balance of payments by the early 1980's and could eventually provide self sufficiency in oil for the country. This is a new commitment in terms of security and defence in which we are becoming increasingly involved.

DEPENDENCE ON SEABORNE TRADE

Against this background let us remind ourselves of the extent that we depend on the sea for our very existence. 70% of the world's seaborne traffic passes through the North Atlantic. The European Economic Community imports and exports by sea nearly half the world's total of seaborne trade by value. In order to achieve this, more than 120 ocean going ships arrive every day in the ports of Western Europe discharging over a million tons of cargo. It is fascinating to reflect on the day-to-day use we all make of seaborne imports. Almost all you eat and drink for breakfast – cereals, fruit juices, coffee and tea, and the raw materials from which our clothes, cosmetics or cars are made, will have been imported. Naturally we need to export to a similar value to maintain our balance of payments. Freedom to use the sea for the peaceful purpose of trade is thus vital, not only to our economic trading position and prosperity, but, in the case of imports such as food and oil, to our actual survival.

Let us look at some of the routes by which this trade flows. This slide shows a plot of the actual positions of British Merchant Ships on a typical day. There are some 700 ships of ocean going size at sea and a further 600 in ports around the world. With this volume of trade such busy waterways as the Straits of Dover have become so congested that traffic separation lanes are now necessary to cut down the risk of collisions. Although these are not yet compulsory you can see they work well.

In the case of critically important cargo such as oil, over 80% of the 110 million tons of crude oil imported annually into the UK comes on the long sea route from the Persian Gulf around the Cape. On present forecasts it is unlikely that the re-opening of the Suez Canal will alter this picture to any great extent.

Our Merchant Navy is still one of the largest in the world. If one disregards the flag of convenience of Liberia, only Japan was ahead of us at the beginning of 1975; but even so, we have to transport over half our trade in ships of other flags, including flags of convenience, so we are interested in ensuring the safety of the sea lanes for ships of all friendly nations. Although as a medium size power we can no longer afford to police all the trade routes of the world, our ability to deploy warships where necessary in defence of our national interests is an important check on any who may wish to upset law and order on the high seas.

MARITIME ARMED FORCES

Having considered our Maritime interests let me now go back to discuss the need for Maritime Armed Forces

As a member of NATO the UK is committed, under the North Atlantic Treaty, to collective defence with other members of the Atlantic Alliance against possible Soviet aggression. NATO is thus the linchpin of our maritime strategy and indeed of our whole NATIONAL Defence.

The main task of our Maritime Armed Forces is to contribute to the defence of the United Kingdom, through the provision of a major contribution to NATO's maritime strength. In the key areas of the Eastern Atlantic and Channel Commands, Britain provides the major part of the Alliance's readily available Maritime Forces. Throughout the last year the Royal Navy has operated in these areas an average of forty ships of destroyer and frigate size or above, twenty submarines and fifty smaller ships, supported by Royal Fleet Auxiliaries. A destroyer or helicopter carrying frigate is allocated full time to the NATO Standing Naval Force Atlantic (which consists of up to 8 ships from as many nations) and one mine countermeasures vessel is allocated full time to NATO's Standing Naval Force Channel. These forces demonstrate NATO's ability to work together to protect our common interests.

THE USSR IN THE AGE OF DETENTE

The major pre-occupation of the NATO alliance is its relationship within the Warsaw Pact. Our concern is that in parallel with their stated commitment to detente, the Warsaw Pact countries and Soviet Russia in particular maintain forces which are increasing in strength and capability and appear far larger than could be needed for defensive purposes. Although tension between East and West has not increased in recent years, detente is still far from being permanent and comprehensive. Until it is clearly established upon a lasting foundation of mutual understanding, respect and undiminished security we must take a cautious view of the intentions of the Warsaw Pact. In its recent White Paper on Defence the Government stated that their policy was to work for real and lasting detente in Europe through the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

For this to work, both sides must be convinced that they have more to gain from peaceful co existence than they have from the use, or the threatened use, of force. A successful process of detente is therefore dependent upon NATO remaining sufficiently strong and united to avoid negotiating from a position of weakness.

The Soviet Union has achieved strategic Nuclear Parity with the United States and is developing an improved armoury of strategic nuclear weapons designed at least to maintain it. Notwithstanding the Strategic Arms Limitation talks, the Russians are developing four new types of Inter Continental Ballistic Missiles and some of these will carry multiple warheads and be protected in hardened silos. Their submarine launched ballistic missile force increases monthly and they can now threaten much of the world from their home waters using the DELTA Class submarine.

In the Eastern Atlantic and Channel Areas which are the forward sea areas of NATO, this slide shows the odds we face against the Soviet Northern Fleet. All the seaborne supply and reinforcement routes from North America to Britain and the European mainland pass through these areas. If the balance of Maritime power were allowed to shift so far in favour of the Warsaw Pact that it had an evident ability, in a period of tension, to isolate Europe by sea, the effect would be profound.

This is because the Warsaw Pact faces the Alliance with a marked superiority in manpower and conventional weapons. In Europe, Warsaw Pact conventional forces now outnumber NATO forces by roughly 20% in men and over 2:1 in tanks, aircraft and guns. On NATO's Northern flank the disparities are even greater. An evident ability to keep open the transatlantic sea lanes in a period of tension to enable NATO's troops on the ground in central Europe to be reinforced from the huge American arsenal is essential to the credibility of NATO's defensive strategy, and to prevent the Warsaw Pact – who can much more easily reinforce the Soviet armies – from believing that they can snatch a quick and easy victory.

SOVIET MARITIME CAPABILITY

Let us examine the continually growing Soviet Maritime capability in some detail and you will see that Russia is already a Maritime Super-Power.

The Soviet Union and her satellites occupy nearly one-fifth of the world's land area. With land borders to south and west, the north and north-east encased in ice for three-quarters of the year and with China able to threaten her access routes in the south-east, she has few really satisfactory outlets to the sea. However, her trading pattern is quite different from our own, her important lines of communications are internal: roads, railways, rivers and canals. She possesses nearly all the raw materials necessary to sustain her economy and is wealthier in terms of natural resources than the United States.

Yet despite these factors, she has built up her Merchant Marine from a meagre total of some 250 ships in 1960 to 1200 today, with which she is extending her trading influence and making her mark on world freight rates.

Her fishing fleet is already the largest and most modern in the world. Her Hydrographic, Space and Research ships are all centrally controlled from Moscow and form a para-military force of very significant potential whether for intelligence gathering or spreading national influence through their presence.

The rise of the Soviet Navy has been even more dramatic. At the end of the Second World War it was almost entirely organised and equipped for coastal defence with a meagre amphibious capability. Today it is a most formidable world wide force which can challenge anything the Alliance can deploy. This change in capability is best illustrated by two pictures.

First the relatively low level of deployment of Soviet Naval units on a typical day in the early 1960s, and second how the picture looks today. Specifically, the Soviet force level in the Mediterranian is being maintained at over 50 ships – four times the number that were deployed there ten years ago and in their last big Ocean Exercise ('OKEAN') in April 1975 some 200 Warships were deployed world wide.

But perhaps more startling than the numerical increase is the rapid development of her navy, in terms of quality. Eight new designs of missile armed cruisers and destroyers have appeared since 1966, (including the KARA class,) together with seven new classes of nuclear submarines. This is indeed an awesome achievement.

Altogether she now has over 250 surface ships of frigate size and above, of which about a third are missile armed.

Other impressive surface ships in the Soviet Fleet are the missile cruisers Moskva and Leningrad, each capable of operating 18 helicopters in their anti-submarine role.

Some 250 fast patrol craft, over half of which carry four or more missiles with the remainder torpedo armed, present an elusive and hard-hitting challenge out to some 200 miles from land.

However the most formidable element of the Soviet threat is its huge submarine force which comprises over 400 boats. As a matter of interest the Germans started the last war with fewer than 50 submarines. Almost all new Soviet submarines are nuclear powered and these replace older types in the fleet at a rate of about one a month. Long and short range cruise missiles, as well as equivalent systems to Polaris are now widely fitted. Her new DELTA class submarines, I have already told you about. They have as well some 30 YANKEE class, each equivalent to one of our four POLARIS submarines.

Their Naval Air Force has some 1000 aircraft and helicopters, including missile armed, reconnaissance and anti-submarine types, many of which are capable of operating at a considerable distance from shore bases. Soviet reconnaissance satellites together with air, surface and submarine operations are capable of world-wide surveillance of NATO surface ships.

The Soviet Union is now constructing two new Aircraft Carriers of about 35,000 tons with an angled flight deck, which are expected to carry Jet vertical take off aircraft as well as helicopters.

In addition the very large submarine element, the heavy armament of the surface ships and the deployment of substantial amphibious forces, all indicate the Soviet's determination to achieve a position of dominant superiority at sea as well as on land. A fleet of this character cannot be justified as necessary to defend the Soviet Union and her allies against attack from the West. Indeed the maintenance by the Soviet Union of a substantial naval presence in the Mediterranean, smaller permanent forces in the Indian Ocean and off West Africa, together with regular visits to the Caribbean are clear evidence of their intention to use their military power in support of their political and strategic aims over an ever widening area of the world. To further these aims the Soviet Union has obtained overseas shore facilities for the navy and these are frequently developed, in the first instance, through fishery agreements, arranging for repairs to Soviet Merchant ships or the provision of economic aid illustrated here. She has used bases in countries on the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and the West Coast of Africa – often in places which we ourselves have vacated. In the course of their exercise OKEAN 75, for instance, the USSR employed bases at Berbera, Conakry and in Cuba.

I do not intend to make predictions about the way in which this increased Soviet maritime capability might be used, but remember that once she possesses this capability her intentions for using it can change at any time. Remember too that NATO is very vulnerable with its main power base in the United States, separated from the front line of Europe by some 3,000 miles of sea. This reinforcement route would be essential to NATO in periods of tension, when substantial reinforcements might be required to strengthen NATO's deterrent capability; and if a conflict did break out on land the ability to resupply by sea would be a critical factor in the battle. In fact, were we to lose the use of the North Atlantic, NATO would cease to be an effective alliance, and the Russians could hold the West to ransom. But for 26 years NATO has been effective, and provided we continue to support it adequately, it will remain so.

ALLIANCE STRATEGY

NATO's strategy is defensive. It is based first on a determination to act jointly if any of its members are attacked; second on a capability to respond effectively whatever the level of aggression; and third on a flexibility in this response such that an enemy will be forced to conclude

that the price of conflict outweighs any possible gain.

For this strategy to be effective at sea NATO's maritime forces must be equipped and organised to counter all forms of Soviet naval action at any level. The United States provided the largest maritime contribution to this task but she cannot be expected to bear the whole of the burden alone. She therefore looks to European navies to blunt the Soviet attack in the forward areas of the Eastern Atlantic and the Channel. Britain by virtue of her dependence on the sea, her geography and her naval expertise plays the major part in this and the Government has endorsed this vital task by announcing in the recent Defence Review that our contribution will remain virtually undiminished.

A further point I would ask you to bear in mind is that the world's oceans provide a neutral environment where force can be used with fewer risks than on land. Conflict at sea in isolation could be an attractive option for the Soviets. An aggressor merely has to put his ships on display to establish a claim or back a threat.

This slide shows some examples of the many occasions in which the Royal Navy has been committed to countering such threats since World War II. We are still involved in some of these today, and bearing in mind that the economic stakes have doubled in the last 12 years the prospect of uncertainty and turbulence continues.

BRITAIN'S NAVAL CAPABILITY

The Royal Navy is the instrument by which Government maritime policy is supported. Let us have a look at the ships we have to implement this policy and also their capabilities should deterrence fail. Remember, however, that the main task in peacetime is to maintain the deterrent at sea and to demonstrate our professionalism and readiness. This can only be done by constant training and exercising with our allies.

THE FRIGATE

The Frigate is the smallest unit of the Fleet that can be deployed independently world-wide, to provide a presence and be the traditional "maid of all work".

The Leander class is the backbone of our frigate force and most are fitted with a 4.5" medium range gun and the SEACAT close range missile system. These ships also carry a Wasp helicopter which can fire air to surface missiles at high speed targets such as missile or torpedo boats. In addition, in the anti-submarine role the Wasp carries two homing torpedoes and can be controlled to attack submarines up to ten miles from the ship.

The new anti-submarine missile IKARA is also being fitted to some Leanders to improve their capability.

Type 21 Frigate

HMS AMAZON, the first of the Type 21 Class, joined the fleet in May 1974 and has greater speed and needs fewer men than the Leanders.

Because of the smaller complements and advanced designs in ships like the Type 21 we have found that there is a greater need than ever to train our officers and ratings to the peak of efficiency in their professional skills. Despite the staggering development in technology in recent years, the reliance on the human being is in no way reduced. The well-trained sailor is the greatest single factor contributing to the success of our policies. I think you would be proud of the high quality and professionalism of the men you see here whose average age in a ship today is little over 20.

HMS AMAZON will bring to sea the new Lynx helicopter which has better speed and range than the Wasp and is designed to attack submarines with lightweight torpedoes.

THE DESTROYERS

The GMD with SEASLUG

The COUNTY class destroyers have a standard displacement of some 5,000 tons and a complement of 485 men. They carry 4.5" guns, a Wessex anti-submarine helicopter, the SEASLUG medium range surface to air missile and some of the class are being fitted with the EXOCET surface to surface missile system.

Type 42 GMD

HMS SHEFFIELD, the first of the new type of destroyer designed to replace the COUNTY class is currently on sea trials, and carries the new 4.5" quick firing gun, a Lynx helicopter and the SEADART missile system. SEADART provides us with a much improved air defence capability, and is currently the finest missile system of its type in the world.

HMS SHEFFIELD is also fitted with SCOT, the Royal Navy's latest shipborne satellite communications terminal, which is being fitted in frigates and larger ships, and allows the most modern communication techniques to be applied to the command and control of the Fleet.

AIRCRAFT CARRIERS AND CRUISERS

At all levels of hostilities, the fixed wing aircraft carrier ARK ROYAL provides the most powerful overt deterrence that the Royal Navy can deploy. She makes an important contribution to NATO's Atlantic Strike Fleet, as a flagship of a carrier group. She will continue in service until the late 1970s and during these years her Buccaneers and Phantoms will provide a potent attack and air defence capability, backed-up by similar Royal Air Force aircraft based ashore. ARK ROYAL also carries a squadron of Sea King helicopters to provide an essential element in the anti-submarine warfare defence of the force. Each of these helicopters is a complete weapon system in itself.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

Now what of the future surface ships. A new class of frigate called the Type 22 – the first of which has already been ordered – will carry the Lynx helicopter, improved submarine detection equipment and EXOCET. They will defend themselves with SEA WOLF, a short range surface to air guided missile system which will destroy fast, low-flying missiles.

However, the most important surface ships of the future will be the anti-submarine cruisers. The first ship of the class, HMS INVINCIBLE, is now building at Vickers in Barrow. A ship such as this provides easily the most cost-effective means of deploying essential anti-submarine helicopters to sea in worthwhile numbers and she will also provide command and control facilties, a SEADART missile system and will operate the HARRIER. This vertical take-off aircraft will provide limited air cover for the Fleet outside the range of shore bases and will carry out that vital initial task of shooting down the shadower, upon which the Russian long range missile armed ships and submarines depend for target information.

SUBMARINES

The advent of nuclear power has brought fundamental changes in the concept of submarine operations. Nuclear powered submarines can deploy world-wide at high speed and totally submerged; they are difficult to detect and can operate for long periods far from base in waters which in all other respects are dominated by the enemy. Their weapons include missiles, torpedoes and mines, and they form the most powerful units of a modern Fleet. Together with the conventional submarines they are primarily used in the anti-submarine and anti-ship roles, but they can perform many other tasks such as minelaying and supporting surface forces in co-operation with Maritime aircraft like the NIMROD.

SURVEILLANCE

The RAF provides air support for the vital roles of surveillance, strike and air defence. Its SHACKLETON, NIMROD, BUCCANEER and PHANTOM aircraft provide important resources for support of the Fleet in peacetime, in periods of rising tension and in war.

SPECIALISED FORCES

Amphibious Forces and Royal Marines

The main operational task of the Royal Marines is to support the Northern flank of NATO where their ability to deploy early in a period of tension with the Amphibious Force and to operate in rugged terrain can be used to their greatest advantage. 45 Commando, one of the 4 Commandos, is a specialist mountain and Arctic ski-trained warfare unit which spends three months of every year in North Norway.

At present we have 2 Commando ships which can each carry a full Commando Group with

artillery, engineers and logistic support. Their helicopters and landing craft provide optimum flexibility in positioning the troops ashore. The Assault ships carry the command and control facilities and heavier vehicles and equipment to support the units ashore. Although one of the Commando ships – HMS BULWARK – will be paid off in 1976 we shall retain the ability to use HMS HERMES in her secondary role as a Commando ship when it is converted to an ASW carrier in 1976.

The Royal Marines also provide detachments for some of our frigates, and take their turn alongside the Army in Northern Ireland. The Navy is also currently helping the Army by providing patrols off the coast of Northern Ireland to prevent gun running.

Mine clearance

Our minesweepers and minehunters are required to maintain swept channels at our naval bases and ports to keep reinforcement routes clear. The TON class minesweepers which played a major part in clearing the SUEZ Canal, will in their turn be replaced by new vessels constructed of non-magnetic Glass Reinforced Plastic, giving a significant improvement in terms of reduced maintenance costs and longer life.

Offshore Interests

The Royal Navy also provides assistance in enforcing fishery protection legislation within the fishing limits around the coasts of the British Isles. We have at present a Squadron of 9 ships for this purpose and regular frigate patrols are made to distant waters fishing grounds. We also have a responsibility to help to protect offshore oil and gas rigs, should we be called upon for assistance. To avoid tying down too many of our expensive warships on constant North Sea patrolling, and to increase our surveillance of the installations, we have recently placed an order for 5 new patrol vessels which will operate as an integral part of the Fleet.

Surveying

The mapping and charting of the sea bed is a less obvious but very important aspect of life at sea. Survey ships of the Royal Navy carry out hydrographic and oceanographic surveys for the benefit of ships of all nations – and incidentally the sale of charts is a welcome source of revenue. Surveying ships also contribute to the national economy by working to assist the development of our undersea energy resources.

Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service

If our ships are to be able to operate over the oceans of the world, they must be able to replenish at sea. Today, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service provides us with fuel, food, ammunition and stores from modern, civilian-manned support ships. They travel with us wherever we go and are an integral part of the Fleet.

SSBN – Polaris

If all else fails there still remains the ultimate weapon for deterring war – Polaris .....

CLOSING REMARKS

That we lead and should continue to lead the maritime field in Europe, I am in no doubt. Unlike our European Allies we are an island people poised to cover both the Atlantic and the Channel approaches, we have unrivalled expertise and experience, we have greater maritime interests than any other European member of the Alliance; and only if we continue to contribute strong maritime forces to NATO will the Alliance be able to keep open the sea lanes and guarantee a continuing US ability to come to the defence of Europe on which our safety surely depends; thus our maritime contribution to NATO remains our primary task.

It is often said that we in the Armed Forces are in the insurance business. In the business of insurance, as in deterrence, one has to weigh the cost of the premium against the risk. We can expect to get only as much money as the country thinks the insurance policy is worth. If we were seriously to under-insure we would certainly do so at our peril, particularly in view of the potential of the Soviet maritime strength.

I would, however, like to sound a note of caution about the comparison with insurance as it is not quite exact. When you pay the premium on your car policy you do not in any way reduce the risk of an accident. But when you pay the premium on your defence policy you do. If we forget this we could be led into some false and dangerous conclusions. For example, the fact that there has been no defence "accident" for some time might lead one to argue that there was no risk and that the policy could be cancelled; whereas the conclusion should be that the decision to insure is correct and the insurance is giving you protection.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Navy belongs to you. It needs your interest, your understanding and your support. Above all, it is the concern of all of us that democratic debate on how much we should spend on our defence should be an informed one, knowing the threats we face and how much we have to lose. That is why I am here, and now I should be delighted to answer your questions.