

The "Roaring Forties" The Arena For Tomorrow's War

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SUBJECT AREA Warfighting

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: THE "ROARING FORTIES": THE ARENA FOR TOMORROW'S WAR

I. Purpose: To examine four issues as determinants in the location of future conflicts in which Marine Corps forces would be involved.

II. Problem: The United States bases its foreign policy and military preparedness upon blunting general war in Europe. Current Marine Corps attention is centered around the reinforcement of Norway on NATO's northern flank. Current indications of future wars lead one to conclude that low-level violence in certain areas of the world is, in reality, what the United States and the Marine Corps should be looking toward.

III. Data: The United States and all industrial nations of the Western alliance are reliant upon strategic materials in order to meet production requirements. These resources travel by sea. Thirteen locations in the world control the passage of most of the world's commerce. Given the incidence of terrorist activities and guerrilla warfare, chokepoints between forty degrees north and south latitudes are in jeopardy of control or closure by hostile forces. The Rio Pact further extends U.S. security requirements to cover the entire Western Hemisphere. Benign neglect and recent instability in Latin America threaten the U. S. on the southern flank.

IV. Conclusion: The United States is erring in its insistence on the European nations as the priority for diplomacy and military preparedness.

V. Recommendation: As the "first to fight," the Marine Corps should

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take the load and prepare for conflict at the lower end of the spectrum of violence and devote its attention to the "Roaring Forties."

## THE "ROARING FORTIES": THE ARENA FOR TOMORROW'S WAR

### OUTLINE

Thesis statement: United States reliance on imported strategic materials, the free world's reliance on shipping lanes, important treaties with emerging nations, and the nature of modern warfare require the Marine Corps to prepare for response in predictable locations within the "Roaring Forties."

- I. Status Quo
  - A. Articles in professional magazines discuss Marine Corps cold-weather operations.
  - B. Marine contingency plans center on the Norwegian nation.
  - C. Erroneous thought processes negate the effects of geography and geology as strategic determinants.
  
- II. Strategic Materials
  - A. There are material requirements for growth in the modern world.
  - B. The U. S. is using raw materials faster than any other nation.
  - C. The location of most nations importing raw materials to the U. S. is within the "Roaring Forties."
  
- III. Strategic Shipping Lanes and "Chokepoints"
  - A. Thirteen chokepoints are of interest to all nations.
  - B. American naval power is required to keep the chokepoints open.
  - C. The majority of chokepoints are located between forty degrees north and south latitude.
  
- IV. The Emergence of Latin America
  - A. The Rio Pact covers more land area and population than any other U. S. treaty.
  - B. U. S. foreign policy toward Latin America has been of mixed success.
  - C. Brazilian impetus has sparked modern inter-American relationships.
  - D. The power of Latin America is in its geography, natural resources, population and diplomacy.
  - E. U. S. attention must turn from NATO to Latin America to ensure stability in the region.
  
- V. The Modern Spectrum of War and Geography
  - A. Modern warfare is found in the lower end of the spectrum assigned to all wars:
    1. Terrorist actions
    2. Guerrilla warfare
    3. Limited conventional warfare
  - B. Since 1974, twelve conventional wars have been fought.
  - C. Thirty-two nations have been involved in guerrilla war in recent time.
  - D. Most modern wars have been between the "Roaring Forties."
  
- VI. The Future
  - A. The U. S. requires strategic materials to maintain its strength.
  - B. The nation's interests are the Marine Corps' future requirements.
  - C. The Marine Corps must be the first to identify the threat and theater

- of operations for they are historically the "first to fight."
- D. History, geography and geology indicate Marine Corps attention should be within the "Roaring Forties."

THE "ROARING FORTIES": ARENA FOR TOMORROW'S WAR

Over the past several years, many articles have appeared in professional journals about the requirement for Marine Corps training emphasis to be placed upon cold-weather operations. This has been in response to the recently assigned mission of the Marine Corps as a strategic reserve for the Northern flank of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).<sup>1</sup> The ideas presented in the articles have been worthwhile, for the most part, and several superb training ideas and operational considerations have been offered. However, all have missed the mark. Northern Europe is not where the activity requiring Marine response is going to occur in the period 1985 to 2010. In fact, if history, geography and geology are taken as determinants, a global picture evolves that focuses on specific locations for Marine involvement with very few involving northern Europe.

Part of the reason for "jumping on the bandwagon" to support cold-weather operations in Norway is every Marine's insatiable desire for specific focus: "Show me what you want and I'll do it." Marines are probably the most "focused" people in the world! In our own inimitable style, we understand the need for Marine support in Europe, we want to respond quicker and better than anyone else tasked for NATO roles and we want to do it correctly. All are admirable reasons and worthy of emulation. But this narrowing of focus to a specific European location, particularly for II MAF forces, leaves out the most important concerns: the areas of the world which, if we don't control, may cause this nation to cease to exist as a world power. Furthermore, the geographical considerations of modern conflicts indicates that the return to the basics of amphibious operations is probably more important now, and in the near

future, than at any time in the last forty years. United States reliance on imported strategic materials, the free world's reliance on shipping lanes, important treaties with emerging nations, and the nature of modern warfare, require the Marine Corps to prepare for response in predictable locations within the "Roaring Forties."

#### STRATEGIC MATERIALS

The industrial nations of the world require certain materials to produce finished goods. Historically, those nations which possessed the materials within their own borders, or in their possessions, were quickly able to grow economically. With that economic growth came power. The Industrial Revolution mechanized the production of finished goods, allowing a nation to produce substantial export goods with which to enrich itself. The inherent wealth brought by a nation's materials also had military application: metal for armor plate, ball bearings for engines and turrets, and with the evolution of aircraft, components light enough to propel airborne but strong enough to withstand the stresses of combat.

The United Kingdom is a recent historical example of a nation using its industrial might and mineral wealth to accelerate its mercantile growth. Its vast empire contained the minerals to augment or fill-in for those found lacking at home. Britain was a power rivaled only by ancient Rome. But the loss of her colonies, and their minerals, saw Britain forced to compete on the world market for the limited minerals available. In fact, several former colonies discovered new lodes of minerals after their independence and, with industrial capability, grew to rival Britain. Examples would be the United States, Canada and Australia. The super-powers of today are the countries with naturally endowed fortunes in minerals which, when coupled with their technological skills, have converted raw materials to finished goods of value to the world as a whole. In the current economic order, world powers are industrial nations that

convert, in sufficient quantity, natural and imported materials to meet national demands. Emerging nations seem to be those that possess the energy and raw materials but lack the industrial base to convert their raw materials to meet national demands or world competition.<sup>2</sup>

The United States, as a super-power state, has one of the most abundant supplies of raw materials available on earth. It is also using the raw materials faster than anyone thought possible. In fact, with few exceptions, we are now forced to import many raw materials to meet industrial and technological demands. In some cases, our technological advances have forced us to be wholly dependent on certain countries to meet our needs in the manufacture of critical items required for the health and welfare of the nation--as well as its defense. These critical items are strategic materials--items which, if lost, could cause irreparable harm to the nation and possible changes in the balance of power. Some of these materials, and their uses, are listed in Appendix A.

As can be seen from Appendix A, many products we rely on, such as steel, require the importation of a variety of raw materials. The majority of nations exporting these raw materials are either Western allies or neutral countries. Of concern, however, are the Third World countries and those countries experiencing economic or political troubles that provide the United States with its required materials. Some of these nations are: India, Chile, Peru, South Africa, Bolivia and New Caledonia.\* Any internal disruption in these countries will slow export of the critical resources the U. S. needs. An external disruptive force would sever the lifeline our nation depends on or force greater reliance on the remaining exporting countries. The oil crisis in the mid-1970's is a recent example of international extortion affecting the very fabric of many nations. Of interest is the location of the exporting nations on the globe. In

Appendix D it can be seen that most are located between forty degrees north latitude and forty degrees south latitude--the "Roaring Forties!" Most are countries possessing coastlines and all have access to ports, either within their own borders or through agreements with neighboring nations. To protect our nation's vital interests in strategic materials, the Marine Corps must be prepared for response to crisis within the "Roaring Forties."

#### STRATEGIC SHIPPING LANES

From a geographical viewpoint, there are areas of the earth which have naturally formed funnels through which the world's shipping must pass. These Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) are vitally important to every importing and exporting nation of the world. These funnels may be appropriately called "chokepoints," of which there are thirteen of impor-

\*See Appendix B for a more complete listing.

tance to all countries--not just the United States. These chokepoints are the:

1. Straits of Gibraltar
2. Straits of Malacca
3. GI-UK Gap (Greenland, Iceland and United Kingdom Gap)
4. Cape of Good Hope
5. Yucatan Channel and Straits of Florida
6. Sea of Japan
7. Kurile Islands
8. Bosporous
9. Bab-el-Mandeb
10. Baltic Straits
11. Mozambique Channel
12. Suez Canal
13. Panama Canal

Nations that control these chokepoints control the free use of the seas for international commerce. The loss of one or more of these funnels could create economic hardship on any country requiring oil or other needed resources. The geological assets of a nation exporting its goods are only as great as the ability to transit the above areas. The impor-

ting and exporting nations alike become economic hostages to geography and geology--if the chokepoints are closed, no one can obtain what they lack on a natural or monetary level.

It is American naval power that will be required to keep these SLOCs open for transit by western allies or neutral nations. By charter, the Marine Corps is to prepare to conduct amphibious operations "...in the seizure and defense of advanced naval bases..."<sup>3</sup> wherever required. Establishing forces ashore at the entries to the aforementioned chokepoints would permit their remaining open if threatened, as well as providing the establishment and security of the advanced naval bases required by the operating naval forces. A glance at the globe shows that the majority of chokepoints are located between forty degrees north latitude and forty degrees south latitude.

#### THE EMERGENCE OF LATIN AMERICA

In September, 1947, the United States and twenty other nations of the Americas signed the "Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance," also known as the "Rio Pact." This treaty was ratified by the Senate and became effective in December, 1947 and , in accordance with Article VI of the U. S. Constitution, it is the law of the land.<sup>5</sup> No other U. S. treaty encompasses so many signatories or covers the land mass and population as does the Rio Pact. The treaty follows many years of on-again-off-again relationships with our Latin American neighbors. The many problems in our relationships with Latin America are somewhat reflective of American ambivalence toward Latin America. It is also reflective of the unique political structure of the United States and its changing foreign policy.

Essentially, responsibility for foreign affairs remains unsolved in the United States. "The Constitution nowhere makes clear on whom the ultimate responsibility for the conduct of foreign affairs exists."<sup>6</sup>

According to the Supreme Court, in *The United States versus Curtiss-Wright Export Corporation*, the President is vested with "delicate, plenary, and exclusive powers" in the conduct of foreign affairs<sup>7</sup>--arguable by members of the House and Senate Foreign Relations Committees! Throughout our history various administrations have pursued foreign policy in a manner reflective of the era when in power: utopian, ideological, sentimentalistic or neo-isolationist. Because of U. S. vacillation toward Latin America, and using the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary which "...may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of wrong-doing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power...",<sup>8</sup> "...the majority of Latin American nations had begun to look upon the United States with increasing fear and irritation."<sup>9</sup> In fact, after World War I, the Monroe Doctrine was actually perceived as an instrument of U. S. domination. The period 1905-1926 saw extensive U. S. intervention in the Caribbean and Central America which gave rise to a sense of panic in Latin American nations. With the birth of the League of Nations, a sense of independence was born in the Latin American community at large. By the 1930's a feeling of political cordiality had returned to the U. S.-Latin American relationship. This cordiality improved dramatically with the start of World War II.

It is interesting to note that World War II, with its carnage and destruction, provided the ashes from which the phoenix of inter-American relationships was born. Part of this is directly attributable to the nation of Brazil. "The United States and Brazil are the only two non-European countries, except for the British dominions, whose troops have fought in Europe since the Moors were chased out of Spain."<sup>10</sup> A 20,000 man Brazilian Expeditionary Force was sent to Europe and fought bravely in the Italian Campaign. According to former Secretary of State, Cordell

Hull:

"Brazil's contribution to the Second World War was much more impressive than its contribution to the First. Its strategic position was of incalculable importance. Its air bases were extended and modernized, and placed at the disposal of the United States military authorities; its air force collaborated with the United States in the hunting down of German submarines; its destroyers and corvettes helped in the patrolling of the Atlantic and the protection of convoys; its immense resources of strategic raw materials became available to the United Nations. Brazil also collaborated with the Allies and supported diplomatic moves in Lisbon, for example, in attempts to put and end to Portuguese supplies of wolfram to Germany."<sup>11</sup>

From this conflict, Brazil emerged as an ascendant power in world politics, particularly among the non-aligned nations.

The ascendancy of Brazil within South America caused the United States to pursue a more favorable relationship with all Latin American states. Historically, liberal U. S. foreign affairs policies have improved relations within Latin America. The Rio Pact was the culmination of such policies. It was, and still is, pragmatic in its rationale. As Alexander Hamilton said, "Self preservation is the first duty of a nation...."<sup>12</sup> The potential for power is inherent in each of the countries of South America with Central America a strategic land bridge to that power. Realization of this power provided the impetus to pursue a treaty reflecting changed American opinion and its coming to grips with political and economic reality. Yesterday's political and economic realities are the cornerstones of today's defense initiatives.

The power found in Latin America is not necessarily found in its military might. "Eight basic factors determine the power of a nation: geography, natural resources, industrial capacity, military preparedness, population, national character, national morale, and the quality of its diplomacy."<sup>13</sup> Its power is in its geography, natural resources, population and diplomacy. The proximity of several Latin American nations to the two Western Hemisphere chokepoints, and the natural resources vital

to our own existence, would seem to dictate a growing dependence on stability in the Americas.<sup>14</sup> For example, the current unrest in Nicaragua and its arming by Soviet-backed agents provides more than a threat to Honduras. Nicaragua's southern neighbor, Costa Rica, has no military and employs only 5,600 people in a para-military force. Southern expansion into Costa Rica and Panama by Nicaragua, or insurgent forces backed by Cuba, could disrupt our only two-ocean link, the Panama Canal. The land bridge to South America would also be broken with the strategic significance that implies. The Yucatan Channel and the Straits of Florida are currently under MIG-23 fighter coverage from Cuba and, should Nicaragua obtain the MIG-21 or -23, overlapping coverage would be obtained. Such coverage would jeopardize free passage from coastal U. S. ports.

Recent unrest within Central America, instability in Chile and a growing Soviet presence in Peru would indicate the U. S. has neglected its southern flank while buttressing its NATO allies. It is a growing imperative that the United States, over the next two decades, turn its attention from NATO (a stable organization of stable countries) to its Latin American neighbors. A lengthy period of nonconfrontational diplomacy will be necessary to stabilize relations. A vital asset in any type of U. S. diplomatic venture is the ability to call upon the Marine Corps to assist in the preservation of peace and protection of American interests. American interests are, in reality, Pan-American interests. This conclusion is reflective of current U. S. policy: "The Rio Treaty embodies our long-standing commitment to the security of our Latin American neighbors. It is within the context of that treaty that we formulate our security policy for the region...."<sup>15</sup>

#### THE MODERN SPECTRUM OF WAR AND GEOGRAPHY

As most students of warfare are aware, the spectrum of conflict is

one that flows from banditry on the lowest end to general nuclear warfare on the upper end. Enclosed within are terrorism, guerrilla war, limited conventional warfare, general conventional war and limited nuclear warfare. Essentially, there are three types of modern war popularly pursued in the world today: terrorist actions, guerrilla war and limited conventional war. These wars are popular, particularly the first two types, for they involve little expenditure of money or training for the results obtained. They also capitalize on the inability of most modern conventional armies to respond effectively to unconventional conflict.

Many authorities have declared conventional war to be an obsolete form of conflict, particularly with the rise of guerrilla warfare. In 1974, Brian Michael Jenkins, of the Rand Corporation, suggested that "...modern conventional war, the kind that is declared and openly fought, is becoming obsolete for a variety of reasons."<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, since that statement, twelve conventional wars have been fought; most have been confined to Southwest Asia and the Middle East. Some notable conventional wars are the border war between Ecuador and Peru in 1980, the Falkland Islands War in 1982, North Vietnam's conflicts with South Vietnam, China and Cambodia, and the four-year war still raging between Iran and Iraq. In a later work, Mr. Jenkins set the record straight on the course of modern war<sup>17</sup> but only now are people realizing the too frequent resort to the profession of arms for conflict resolution. The spectre of global conventional war has been supplanted by piecemeal destruction by minor powers.

Of greater importance is the growing occurrence of the terrorist action and guerrilla war. In the last fifteen years, the numbers of terrorist acts have been too numerable to count (with the figure changing daily) while thirty-two nations have been involved in some form of guerrilla war.<sup>18</sup> Recent terrorist acts have added religion to their erstwhile

political causes thus further blurring the reasons behind striking against a target. But a curious event has taken place with the advent of terrorism, and to some extent, guerrilla war. Like general conventional war, non-combatant civilian personnel are "acceptable" casualties. The spectrum of warfare goes full circle in this regard with ominous warnings for the world populace.

Guerrilla wars and terrorist actions seem to be the product of four "patron" states: Libya, Iran, Cuba and South Yemen. (Most public figures would also add the Soviet Union, Iraq and Syria to this list.) Targets seem to be nations undergoing change and Western diplomats. The guerrilla is actively pursuing his trade within Third World countries, particularly in Latin America and coastal Africa. But a review of the guerrilla wars over the last fifteen years indicates a disturbing pattern. In Appendix E, these guerrilla wars have been depicted with their proximity to a majority of the world's chokepoints clearly visible to the most casual reader. The portent for American involvement looms greater the closer a war gets to a vital sealane. While the American public watches for signs of a general conventional or nuclear war in Europe, piecemeal destruction of political systems and governments occurs worldwide. The closure of a chokepoint or seaway by terrorists or guerrillas produces the same result as if closed by a super-power in general war! Fully eighteen percent of the world's nations have been involved in guerrilla wars over the last fifteen years and the "Roaring Forties" have been the battleground.

#### THE FUTURE

Protection of a nation is predominantly futuristic in its outlook. If there is peace at a given moment in time then preservation of that peace involves response to a future threat. If there is political stability and popular tranquility at a given moment in a nation's history,

then the threat of its demise is external and yet to come. Military organizations are, from their inception, designed to be prepared for that future threat. But preparation is a difficult and nebulous concept. What is too much? What is too little? The consequences of the decisions made can lead to bankruptcy on one hand and defeat on the other. The middle ground is the desired goal. To obtain that goal, analysis of world events, trade, economics, politics and military growth or decline are evaluated. The patterns that evolve embark a nation upon its preparation for the perceived threat.

Since World War II, the main focus of attention has been on Europe--the scene of the last "great war." Attention has been displayed toward the Orient, but of much the same nature as found in World War II. The main foe to be faced would be in Europe and the "secondary" effort would occur in the Pacific. With this in mind, a "Fortress Europe" has been allowed to permeate most political and military thought. But there are some basic determinants such as geography, geology, treaties and the guise of modern warfare that will determine our nation's future health and welfare. Our strength and well-being are predicated upon strategic materials required to meet the demands of technology and manufactured goods; upon free access to sea lanes and chokepoints through which these vital supplies must pass; upon stability in our southern neighbors, Latin America, whose potential, if harnessed, could lead to a hemispheric "Pax Americana"; and, finally, the understanding of modern war.

As Marines, we should be concerned with all four areas. We are generally "the first to fight" and, therefore, must be the most prepared to meet national objectives when assigned. But, again, preparation can be too much or too little. Preparation must be predicated on the threat. Recent history and modern warfare would indicate that the threat is within temperate zones and located in coastal nations nearby a vital sea lane or

chokepoint. While our attention is on thirteen European nations, thirty-two other nations have been fighting internal threats and fully twelve conventional wars have been fought since 1970! Nearly one-fifth of the world is involved in struggle. None of the European nations currently provides the U. S. with strategic materials and all are well established, stable countries capable of handling their own security--if only for a period of time to allow for reinforcement. The same cannot be said for nations within the "Roaring Forties." Instead of excessive attention to northern Europe and its possible "high side of the spectrum" conflicts, we should look to the South Atlantic, coastal Africa, the Mediterranean littoral and southern Asia.

The Marine Corps should polish its amphibious doctrine and prepare to counter terrorist actions, guerrilla wars and limited conventional wars in emerging nations of the world. The indiscriminate nature of modern war will surely drag a reluctant America into deployment of its forces to stabilize certain regions of the world. Our recent foray into Lebanon is a glimpse of the future and we must prepare for that eventuality. Our interest in areas such as Norway is commendable and probably fits nicely into some grand European scheme-of-maneuver. However, modern war, emerging nations and their problems, and protection of vital SLOCs to transport vital resources indicate the next theater of operations for the Marine Corps is to be found in the temperate zones of the "Roaring Forties."

#### FOOTNOTES

1United States of America, "Memorandum of Understanding Between the Governments of the United States of America and Norway Governing Prestockage and Reinforcement of Norway," 16 January 1981.

2William A. Faunce and William H. Form, Comparative Perspectives on Industrial Society, p. 20.

- 3United States Marine Corps, Fleet Marine Force (IP 1-4), p. 1.
- 4Committee on Foreign Affairs, Collective Defense Treaties, pp. 21-24.
- 5Jane D. Flatt, pub., The World Almanac and Book of Facts, p. 447.
- 6Walter Lippman, U. S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic, p. 225.
- 7J. William Fulbright, "American Foreign Policy in the 20th Century Under an 18th Century Constitution." Delivered as the sixth Robert S. Stevens Lecture at Cornell University, 5 May 1961.
- 8David Mitrany, American Interpretations, p. 64.
- 9Ibid., p. 65.
- 10J. A. Camacho, Brazil, An Interim Assessment, p. 75.
- 11Cordell Hull, Memoirs of Cordell Hull, p. 423.
- 12Hans J. Morgenthau, In Defense of the National Interest, p. 15.
- 13Ibid., p. 175.
- 14Caspar W. Weinberger, Annual Report to the Congress, pp. 40-41.
- 15 Ibid., p. 220.
- 16Brian M. Jenkins, High Technology Terrorism and Surrogate War: The Impact of New Technology on Low-Level Violence, p. 2.
- 17Jenkins, New Modes of Conflict, p. 4.
- 18David Wood, Conflict in the Twentieth Century, quoted in Jenkins, New Modes of Conflict, p. 7.
- 19Jane D. Flatt, op. cit., p. 125.
- 20Caspar W. Weinberger, op. cit., p. 96.

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