The North Pacific Campaign in Perspective

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From the earliest years of this century, American military planners focused their attention on the possibility of a conflict with Japan. It was primarily within that context that Alaska and the North Pacific became important elements in the nation's strategic thinking.[1] The American scenario for a war with Japan anticipated that the latter would initiate hostilities by attacking the Philippines. The US response would be a counteroffensive featuring either a slow or rapid advance across the Pacific followed by a decisive fleet action in which the main force of the Imperial Japanese Navy hopefully would be defeated. Finally, the US fleet would impose a crushing maritime blockade on Japan's home islands. The focus of these operations was to be in the Central Pacific. But military doctrine demanded that the vital flanks, including the North Pacific, be defended or used to the maximum extent possible to further American war aims.

Interest in the North Pacific was heightened by other considerations. One was geography. The shortest distance between the US and Japan, via the great circle route, lay astride the Aleutians (see figure 1). The westernmost island in that chain, Attu, was only 650 miles from the major Japanese military base at Paramushiro at the northern tip of the Kuriles. But it also was recognized that naval operations in Alaska, particularly in the Aleutians, would be impacted by the incredibly bad weather in the region. There was one further restraint. Although the Kuriles were within easy striking range of the Aleutians, they were far removed from Japan's all-important economic activities on Honshu. The distance from Paramushiro to Tokyo, for example, was almost 1300 miles. The vital sea lanes used to bring oil, iron ore, and other essential commodities to Japan from resource-rich areas in South Asia were even more remote.

If it is essential to stress that any war with Japan was likely to include operations in the North Pacific, it must also be acknowledged that the other major power in the North Pacific, the USSR, was equally close to Alaska. If the Soviets were allied with the US, the important Pacific route across which supplies and American military forces could reach Russia's maritime provinces was in the northern sea lanes terminating at Petropavlovsk on the Kamchatka peninsula or farther south at Vladivostok. In the event of Soviet-American enmity, such as the Cold War that occupied the world's attention for

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four decades after World War II, proximity to the Soviet Union demanded that strenuous defensive efforts be made in Alaska.

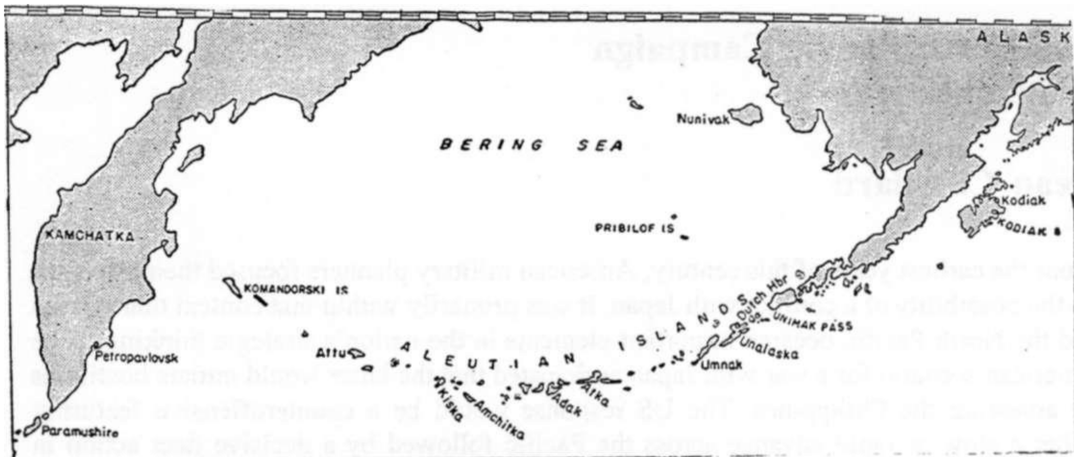

Figure 1: The Aleutian Islands and the Eastern Soviet Union.

Source: Courtesy of the author.

In light of these considerations, it is not surprising that the defence of the North Pacific received major consideration during the pre-war years. That requirement was reflected in the concept of a defence triangle demarcated by Alaska, Hawaii, and the Panama Canal, first advanced by Army planners in the 1930s as the basis for the nation's Pacific strategy. For the Navy, the need to secure Alaska was underscored by its rich natural resources, including the coal and later petroleum required by American warships.[2]

It is interesting to note that as early as 1911 Alfred Thayer Mahan argued that the best chance for a speedy American victory lay in concentrating the US fleet at Kiska. Mahan felt that the simple presence of this force on the northern flank would lead the Japanese fleet to withdraw from its presumed conquest of Hawaii at the outset of a war with the US. From Kiska the American fleet also could fall upon Japanese positions to the west of Hawaii. Other naval strategists, however, vigorously rebutted Mahan's plan. While agreeing that it was important to safeguard the Northern Pacific, in their view major fleet operations in the Aleutians were not feasible because of the severe climate and poorly charted waters, the inadequacy of Kiska's harbour, and the remoteness of the Aleutians chain from Japan's most important economic targets. In the face of such arguments Mahan soon abandoned his northern strategy.[3]

In the years preceding World War II, American war planners generally did not see the North Pacific as a major theatre. But a notable exception was General Billy Mitchell, the famed prophet of airpower, who emphasized in the 1920s the value of using the Aleutians as a base for a bombing campaign against Japan. Despite the meteorological problems involved in air operations in the area, Mitchell was impressed by the strategic

significance of the North Pacific, where the spheres of interest of Japan, the USSR, and the US intersected. He was convinced that an American bombing capability in the region could deter war with Japan or, if necessary, win a quick and decisive victory.[4]

More typical of military thinking in this period were plans for relatively minor activities typical of warfare on the flanks of a major battlefield. In this tradition, planners recognized the possibility that the Japanese might seize positions in the Aleutians as bases for raiders, other light naval forces, or intelligence-gathering. In response to that threat, and in order to allow the US to use this strategic area, American planners recommended that bases for smaller naval units be established. These facilities offered an opportunity for strategic diversions that hopefully would force the enemy to withdraw units from more important areas in the Central Pacific. Another indication of US interest in the North Pacific came in 1935 and 1937, when the Navy's annual fleet exercises were conducted in part in Alaskan waters. These manoeuvres involved simulations of fleet engagements as well as the capture or defense of advanced bases.[5]

Almost two decades earlier, the US Navy's attention was drawn again to the need to operate in the Northern Pacific when it provided support through Vladivostok for US Army operations in Siberia. The purpose of American military intervention in Russia from 1918 to 1920 was to thwart any effort by Japan, whose forces also were in Siberia, permanently to seize territory at a time when the Russians were locked in a bloody civil war.[6] This operation was a reminder that Asia's North Pacific coast was a potential area of operations for the US. That possibility was echoed in 1937 when naval strategists, including Admiral Harry Yarnell, commander of the US Asiatic Fleet, recognized the desirability of enlisting the USSR in an alliance opposed to Japanese aggression in Asia.[7]

In the 1930s, as the US began to prepare for possible involvement in another world war, and as the Washington Arms Limitation Treaty's restraints expired on the construction of bases in the Aleutians, naval leaders gave increasing attention to the need for facilities that would allow the permanent stationing of forces in Alaska. In 1932 and 1933 surveys by the Navy identified potential base sites for seaplanes and ships in the Aleutians at Dutch Harbor and Adak. In the event of war with Japan, according to a 1936 proposal by the Commandant of the Thirteenth Naval District (the Seattle-based command that had naval jurisdiction over Alaska), the Navy should deploy four seaplane squadrons, ten submarines, and fifteen patrol vessels as a first step in defending the region. In 1937 Ernest J. King, then commander of the air component of the Fleet's Base Force, and later the Navy's senior uniformed leader during World War II, urged that Sitka be developed as a seaplane base. By this time King and other leaders concluded that Kodiak should be another major base. In the first part of 1938, temporary deployments to Kodiak by submarines and amphibious patrol aircraft tested its suitability.[8]

These activities culminated in the worldwide study of naval base needs that Admiral Arthur J. Hepburn submitted to Congress in December 1938. Consistent with the flank strategy typical of naval thinking with regard to the North Pacific, Hepburn did not recommend a major fleet base for this area. But he did call for three aviation facilities from which amphibious patrol aircraft could aid in the defense of Alaska and the Pacific

Northwest. One was at Dutch Harbor, which because of its location in the Aleutians was considered to have the greatest strategic value. Nevertheless, due to the severe weather, Hepburn chose Kodiak instead of Dutch Harbor as the site for the largest seaplane base. The third facility chosen as an airdrome was Sitka on the Alaskan mainland. Admiral Hepburn's committee also recommended that Kodiak and Dutch Harbor be developed for use by submarines. Once again, due to Dutch Harbor's advanced location, the Admiral especially identified it as having "vital importance in time of war."[9] By the fall of 1941, work was completed at Dutch Harbor, Kodiak, and Sitka and these sites became capable of supporting operations by seaplanes and smaller warships.[10]

In August 1939, the possible use of the North Pacific for diversionary operations was suggested once again in a scheme put forth by President Roosevelt. At that time it seemed virtually certain that German aggression would lead to a general European war. In order to deter the Japanese from aiding Hitler by attacking European possessions in Asia, FDR called for deploying a major naval force in the western Aleutians. Through its presence and by using radio deception techniques, such a squadron could lead the Japanese to believe that major American operations were in the offing. Roosevelt hoped this threat would make the Japanese "jittery" and "keep them guessing." The President's naval advisors cautioned against such a provocative course of action, however, and it was never implemented.[11]

Figure 2: PBY Aircraft in Alaska during World War II.

Source: See figure 1.

Figure 3: PBY in Nasty Weather.

Source: See figure 1.

In the prewar era there also were reminders of the USSR's status as a major North Pacific power. Within a few months of the outbreak of the Russian-German war in June 1941, the Soviets became the recipients of American Lend-Lease supplies and equipment. One of the principal routes for delivery was the North Pacific, where Vladivostok was the main receiving port and American-built ships operating under Soviet flags provided most of the transport. In addition, under Lend-Lease almost 8000 US aircraft were flown to Fairbanks, Alaska, from where they were transferred to Soviet crews for the long ferry flight across Russia to the Eastern Front. In comparison to other Lend-Lease routes, the North Pacific was relatively safe from enemy attacks. In fact, throughout the rest of the war Japan honoured the non-aggression treaty it had signed with the USSR in April 1941. The US consistently sought to achieve a fundamental shift in the balance of Pacific power by enlisting the USSR in an anti-Japanese coalition, but Joseph Stalin, embroiled in a life-and-death struggle with Germany, was no more willing than Japan to expand hostilities by opening a new front in the North Pacific.[12]

These prewar preparations were indispensable when war actually came to the shores of Alaska after December 1941. Yet despite the existence of a base structure and well-developed strategic plans, the Navy had only minuscule forces in the area when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. In comparison to the 22,000-person Army presence, the Navy could count less than 600 personnel at its main bases in Dutch Harbor, Kodiak, and Sitka. In terms of units, the Navy operated only six PBY aircraft, a 2000-ton gunboat, two old destroyers, two large Coast Guard cutters, plus minor patrol and yard craft. At this time, forces of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Pacific Northwest included two auxiliary cruisers and three corvettes.[13]

Early in the war, Admiral King and other American strategists explored the possibility of obtaining bases in Siberia to support an aerial assault on Japan's home islands or to mount an amphibious operation against the Kuriles. But the USSR continued to resist involvement in a war with Japan. Especially with no prospect of opening a major front in the North Pacific in 1942, the hard-pressed US Navy sent only minor reinforcements during the initial months of the year. This situation changed only in May 1942 when American intelligence picked up information on Japanese plans to seize Midway, from where they could threaten Hawaii. More fundamentally, Admiral Yamamoto, the Japanese fleet commander, hoped that an invasion of Midway would force the US Navy to accept a major engagement that would inflict ruinous losses upon his enemy. The stratagem of seeking to divert the US from the main point of attack by launching a more minor operation on its flank also was part of Yamamoto's plan. It is not surprising that Japan chose the Aleutians as the site for this diversionary operation. For the North Pacific phase of his campaign, Yamamoto organized an attack force formed around two light carriers, under the overall command of Admiral Boshiro Hosogaya, with orders to attack US bases and to seize positions in the western Aleutians. In addition to diverting US forces from the critical Midway area, the Japanese goal was to preempt an anticipated invasion of the Kuriles, a course of action we now know was rejected by American military leaders in 1942. Hisashi Takahasahi has recently noted that the Japanese also were motivated by fears that the US would use the Aleutians to launch a bombing campaign against their home islands.[14]

Admiral Nimitz, well aware of Japanese strategic intentions from his intelligence, did not send his major strength to Alaska. Instead he concentrated the three US carrier task forces then available in the Pacific for the famous ambush of Japan's attack force off Midway on the morning of 4 June 1942. The eventual loss of four of the enemy's first-line carriers changed the entire course of the Pacific War. But at the same time, Nimitz was able to spare some naval reinforcements for Alaska. Under the command of Rear Admiral Robert A. Theobald, the North Pacific Force grew to include five cruisers, fourteen destroyers and six submarines by early June 1942. Theobald controlled more than 100 Army Air Force and Navy aircraft based in Alaska. After August, 1942, for a period of about two months, his force also included three Canadian armed merchant cruisers *{Prince Robert, Prince Henry,* and *Prince David)* and two newly completed corvettes *{Dawson* and *Vancouver)* that escorted convoys in the Aleutians area. The Admiral did not command American ground forces, but he was expected to establish a cooperative relationship with his Army counterpart, Brigadier General Simon B. Buckner. Unfortunately, from the time Theobald arrived at his headquarters at Kodiak in late May 1942, he displayed an ability to create discord instead of good will in the Navy's relationship with its sister service. During the offensive in June 1942, Theobald largely ignored the enemy's capabilities and mistakenly concluded that Japan's intent was to seize Dutch Harbor. He also has been faulted by historians for establishing his headquarters afloat where, because of the need for radio silence, he was unable to exercise effective command of his units."

The details of the dramatic events in June 1942 when the Japanese launched their attacks on the Aleutians are well-known. That campaign was neither the first nor the last in which the region's inclement weather played a major role. When the North Pacific fogs lifted, it was apparent that Dutch Harbor had been hit by three raids launched from Admiral Hosogaya's carriers on 3-4 June. But in comparison to the strikes at Pearl Harbor seven months earlier, the enemy had limited success. The base at Dutch Harbor continued to be operational despite the fact that some damage was inflicted to the facilities and forty-three American lives were lost. On the other hand, counterattacks by US aircraft against Hosogaya's carrier force were completely ineffective.[16]

On 10 June, American officials learned the results of the amphibious phase of the Japanese thrust into the North Pacific. To Admiral Theobald's surprise, the objective was not Dutch Harbor. Instead, on 7 June, 1200 Japanese troops landed without opposition at Attu. The same day, a comparable force seized Kiska, another undefended position. Attu and Kiska were remote from the rest of Alaska and even further removed from the US. Hence, strategists might argue that the wisest policy would have been to bypass Attu and Kiska, as the US did later with many other Japanese-held islands in the Pacific. But several factors forced the US to accept the challenge of reconquering these positions. One was the psychological effect of the seizure of American territory. Another was the need to maintain sea and air communications across the North Pacific with the Soviets, especially to allow the continued flow of Lend-Lease supplies.[17] In addition, Admiral King and other naval leaders were determined to pursue an offensive strategy in the Pacific. Finally, since a major amphibious offensive was not scheduled in the Central Pacific until later 1943, forces were available for an effort to return Attu and Kiska to American control.[18]

To prepare for these landings, the North Pacific Force, including its Army Air Force component, undertook a systematic campaign of aerial and naval bombardment against Attu and Kiska. The US also used its surface ships, submarines, and aircraft for an interdiction campaign that was almost entirely successful after the Fall of 1942 in halting Japanese movements to the two islands. In all, the enemy's attempts to reinforce Attu and Kiska resulted in the loss of no fewer than three Japanese destroyers, three submarines, and nine merchantmen. In these operations American naval and air forces undertook a classic maritime role — the isolation of the battlefield from outside support. The essential character of this battle was comparable to the prolonged and bloody Solomons campaign in the South Pacific, also waged in 1942-1943, in which Japanese and American forces bitterly contested control of the sea and air around insular positions. Upon that control depended the ability of a nation to attack its enemy ashore and to land, supply, reinforce, or evacuate its own forces.[19]

The theories of maritime support and blockade are simple. But their execution in the Aleutians was greatly complicated by the extraordinarily poor weather conditions in that area. Writers on the North Pacific campaign, including Brian Garfield and Samuel Morison, seem to vie with each other to find ever more graphic words to describe the area's heavy and sudden fogs, williwaw winds, raging seas, and uncharted hazards. Many

tons of gunfire rounds and bombs dropped by Army and Navy aircraft rained down on Attu and Kiska over the months following June 1942. But because of the severe operational limitations caused by poor visibility, other environmental conditions, and the enemy's ability to develop well-protected defensive positions in the spongy tundra of the Aleutians, relatively minor damage was inflicted. The Japanese were equally ineffective in attacking US ships and planes. In fact, operational hazards associated with meteorological or oceanographic conditions inflicted greater damage to American units than did enemy fire. John Cloe points out, for example, that no less than 184 of the 225 Allied aircraft destroyed in the Aleutians were operational losses, with weather being the "prime culprit."[20]

There also were more encouraging aspects of the Aleutian campaign. By their nature, amphibious operations require the cooperation between the Navy and Army that often was absent when Theobald was North Pacific Commander. That was the reason Nimitz and King replaced Theobald with Rear Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid in January 1943. Kinkaid met King's test of being offensive-minded, having previously served as an effective carrier task force commander in the Solomons. He also was fully capable of establishing harmonious and productive relations with the Army. One of Kinkaid's first steps after assuming his new position was to confirm Theobald's earlier decision to move his headquarters from Kodiak to Adak, 1000 miles west of Kodiak and only 250 miles east of Kiska. Here he established a joint headquarters and mess with General Buckner and developed a close professional and personal relationship with that notable Army leader.[21]

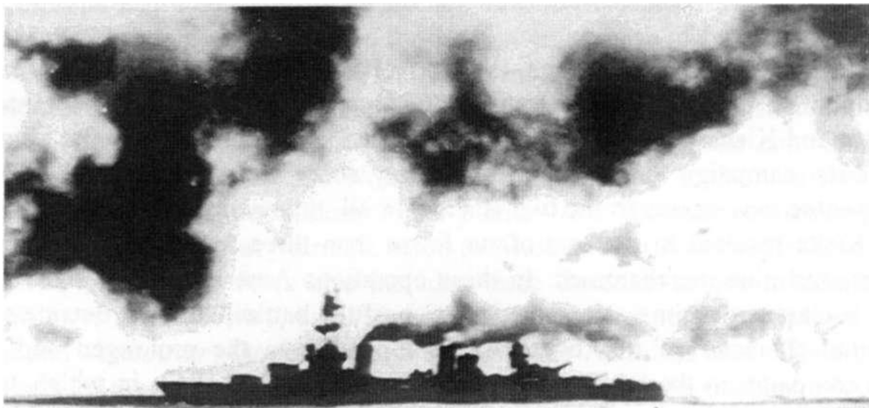

Figure 4: *Salt Lake City* at Komandorski Island.

Source: See figure 1.

Under Admiral Kinkaid occurred the most famous single chapter in the continuing campaign to prevent Japan from supporting its troops in the Aleutians. This was the Battle of Komandorski Islands occurring on 26 March 1943 about 180 miles west of Attu. On that day an American force of two cruisers and four destroyers, under Rear Admiral Charles H. McMorris, intercepted Admiral Hosogaya's squadron, comprised of four cruisers and five destroyers escorting three transports carrying reinforcements and supplies from Paramushiro to Attu. Over the next three and a half hours the two sides traded more than 5000 rounds of gunfire at ranges of eight to twelve miles. Each side scored hits but, amazingly, no ships were sunk. Although both commanders called for air support, no aircraft were able to reach the battle. The dramatic climax to this gruelling surface action came when battle damage caused the cruiser *Salt Lake City* (see figure 4) to go dead in the water for several minutes, while her accompanying destroyers sought to protect the crippled ship by counterattacking the much superior enemy with torpedoes. It was at this time that Hosogaya, unaware of *Salt Lake City's* condition, elected to break off the action and return to Paramushiro, hence admitting failure in his mission to support Attu.[22]

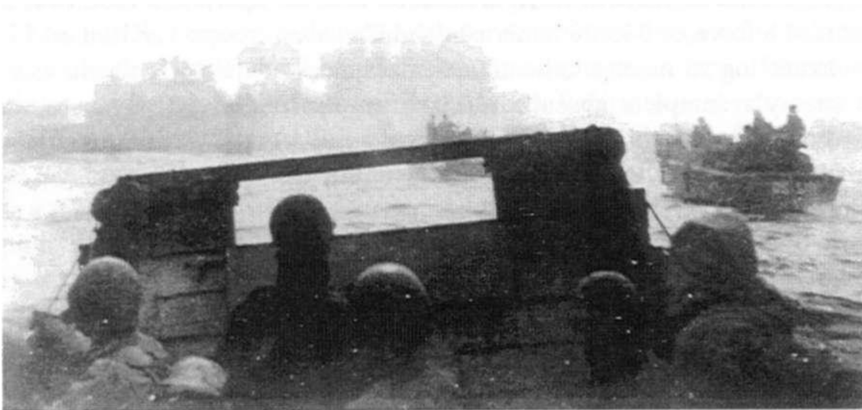

Figure 5: The Invasion of Attu, 1943.

Source: See figure 1.

Considering the staunch defense the Japanese offered when amphibious forces from the Army's Seventh Division landed at Attu on 11 May 1943, the American effort to isolate that island was all the more important (see figure 5). The Attu expedition included a landing force of 11,000 men and a flotilla of twenty-nine ships commanded by Rear Admiral Francis W. Rockwell. Three old battleships and an escort carrier were part of this force. Their heavy guns and aircraft supported the forces ashore and, if necessary, were ready to repel any attempt by the Japanese Navy to interfere. Attu was assaulted before Kiska because it was believed to be less extensively defended. But American troops faced a tough fight: virtually all of Attu's 2500 men fought to the death.

Attu was secured by 29 May, by which time the US counted 600 dead and 1200 wounded. Brian Garfield notes that, as a percentage of the total force involved, this was second only to Iwo Jima as the most costly Pacific campaign. But Garfield also observes that Attu "by its very mistakes and failures...led to later successes in the Pacific."[23]

Sobered by the bloody nature of the Attu campaign, the US prepared a stronger force for the seizure of Kiska in August 1943 (see figure 6). The enemy also learned from its Aleutian experience. Unable adequately to supply and reinforce Kiska, the Japanese decided to abandon it. On 28 July their forces, demonstrating typical skill in using the Aleutian fogs for concealment, evacuated the entire garrison of more than 5000 individuals. Perhaps only in the Aleutians, with its incredibly thick weather, could this withdrawal remain unknown to the US. In addition to its skilful use of the environment, the enemy took advantage of the temporary withdrawal of US ships for refuelling and replenishment following the naval action on 26 July, known as the Battle of the Pips, in which American ships attacked radar contacts believed to represent Japanese warships that now are known to have been phantoms. One must acknowledge that there was growing suspicion among some American officers that the Japanese may have left the island. Nevertheless, Admiral Kinkaid decided to proceed with the operation. A flotilla of nearly 100 ships landed a force of 34,000 American and Canadian troops at Kiska on 15 August 1943, fully expecting to meet another fanatical Japanese defense force. It was a week before the enemy's complete absence was confirmed. In the meantime, to show that operations were never easy in the Aleutians, twenty-five troops were lost to friendly fire, while seventy naval men died when a Japanese mine severely damaged the destroyer *Abner Read*.[24]

Figure 6: Kiska, August 1943.

Source: See figure 1.

Although Admiral Nimitz refused to take the Japanese bait in June 1942 by sending his carrier forces to the North Pacific during the Midway campaign, it can be argued that in the longer run the Japanese conducted a successful deception in the Aleutians. Samuel Eliot Morison notes that for more than a year about 10,000 Japanese troops tied down an American and Canadian army that reached a peak strength of 100,000 in August 1943. With the complete elimination of the Japanese from the Aleutians, however, American strategists re-examined the wisdom of continuing a major campaign in the North Pacific. They soon concluded that it was essential to redeploy many of the forces to other regions of the Pacific and eventually to the Atlantic for major amphibious operations. As part of that realignment, Admiral Kinkaid was detached in October 1943 and ordered to the Southwest Pacific Theatre where he became the highly successful naval commander for General Douglas MacArthur. In June 1944, General Buckner left the North Pacific for Hawaii to take command of the Tenth Army.[25]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff recognized that at a later date it might be desirable to seize positions in the Paramushiro area in operations mounted from the Kamchatka Peninsula. Also discussed was the option of obtaining the air facilities in the Soviet maritime provinces that would be essential for the type of strategic bombing against Japan that Billy Mitchell had championed in the 1920s. As always, the precondition to either of these efforts was the USSR's willingness to join the war against Japan. This fundamental change in the strategic balance of power in the North Pacific would not occur until after the Russians and their Western allies completely defeated Germany.[26]

In the meantime, the US prepared for the possible reinstatement of the North Pacific as a major theatre of war. As earlier, Admiral King, the Navy's senior officer, was a champion of this strategy. At his urging, bases were constructed in the Western Aleutians for a long-range bombing campaign by B-29s against Japan's home islands. Earlier in the war, base development was the responsibility of Army Engineers commanded by Colonel Benjamin B. Talley. But after the spring of 1943 Naval Construction Battalions were primarily responsible for facilities in the Aleutians. Although B-29s were not actually deployed in the Aleutians, other aircraft of the Eleventh Army Air Force and the Navy's Fleet Air Wing Four (including B-17 Flying Fortresses, B-24 Liberators, and the Navy's PV-1 Venturas and PV-2 Harpoons) launched more than 1500 sorties against Japanese bases in the Kuriles from 1943 until the end of the war, starting in February 1944. In addition, a naval surface force of light cruisers and destroyers, also operating out of the Aleutians, undertook about fifteen shore bombardment and anti-shipping missions against Paramushiro and other positions in the Kuriles and the Sea of Okhotsk. American submarine attacks, aimed at isolating the Kuriles by destroying the shipping that supported these islands also were underway. The Japanese could only respond with occasional, ineffective air strikes against the Aleutians. One of the major reasons the US undertook these aerial and surface operations was to deceive the Japanese into believing that an amphibious assault on the Kuriles was imminent, forcing them to station a disproportionate defense force in the area. In fact, the enemy retained up to

80,000 men and 500 combat aircraft in the Kuriles that could have been used with much more deadly effect on other Pacific battlefields.[27]

At the Yalta conference in February 1945 the Soviets finally confirmed their intention to enter the war against Japan after Germany's final defeat. That step was finally taken on 8 August. One of the major concessions made by FDR in return for this long-desired event was agreement that Russia could take possession of the Kuriles. The US also prepared in 1945 for the opening of the new front by stepping up the flow of Lend-Lease aid across the North Pacific. That effort included the transfer of hundreds of smaller naval amphibious, minesweeping, and patrol ships and the training of their Soviet crews. These preparations clearly presaged a Soviet amphibious assault on the Kuriles. In fact, many of these ships and craft appear to have been used during the Soviet occupation of the Kuriles during the latter part of August 1945. In addition, plans were developed to maintain sea and air communications across the North Pacific when the Russians became full partners against Japan. But the long-standing hope of establishing American bases in the Soviet Far East was met with suspicion by the Russians. The only concrete step in this direction was the opening in September 1945 of two US Naval weather stations at Petropavlovsk and on the Siberian mainland.[28]

The North Pacific campaign is too often forgotten. In part this is because operations in that theater are dismissed as having little strategic consequence. Edward Miller, an authority on US strategy in the Pacific, expresses this view by referring to the "evils" of the North Pacific route to Japan, including "weather, topography, logistics, and remoteness from vital objectives." For these reasons, as well as Stalin's refusal to fight Japan until Hitler was defeated, Miller argued that "the north remained a strategic backwater."[29] Samuel Eliot Morison expressed the same view and added that "sailors, soldiers and aviators alike regarded an assignment to [the Aleutians] region of almost perpetual mist and snow as little better than penal servitude."[30]

These authorities make valid points. But there is more to the story. The importance of warfare on the flanks is reflected in the use of the North Pacific by both Japan and the US for strategic diversions and deception. The North Pacific also was a vital route for the flow of Lend-Lease supplies to Russia. Indeed, more tonnage went to the Soviets via this route than through the North Russian and Persian Gulf corridors combined.[31] This material support was of considerable importance in the Russian victory over Germany. A joint US-USSR air and amphibious campaign against Japanese targets in the North Pacific had great potential significance and was a contingency for which the US needed to be prepared. The basic requirement that a sovereign nation defend its own territory was honoured by the US. Finally, the human dimension of warfare needs to be considered. Everyone, military and civilian alike, who experienced the North Pacific campaign felt the profound effect of armed conflict. It is fitting therefore to remember the congratulatory message that Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher, the North Pacific Commander in August 1945, issued at the end of the war. Fletcher reminded his people that their:

part in bringing Japan to her knees has been an important one. Ours has not been a spectacular job but all those who helped drive the invader from the Aleutians, hammered from sea and air at his Kuriles outposts, or worked in the williwaws to prepare for future blows now happily unneeded can well be proud participants in today's victory. Let us celebrate this day not in triumph but with thanksgiving and gratitude. Let us not forget our comrades who cannot share it. The world is now at peace. Let us face the problems that will now confront us with the same spirit [that] has won this terrible war.[32]

NOTES

* Dean C. Aliard recently retired as the US Navy's Director of Naval History. His previous publications have related to naval history and to the history of North American marine science.

1. See Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: The US Strategy to Defeat Japan, ¡897-1945* (Annapolis, 1991).

2. William R. Braisted, *The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922* (Austin, 1971), 37-38; Commander-in-Chief, US Pacific Fleet, "Administrative History of the North Pacific," 27 November 1945 (ms. in Navy Department Library, Washington, DC), 11.

3. *Ibid.,* 33; Miller, *War Plan Orange,* 93 and 100.

4. Miller, *War Plan Orange,* 93.

5. *Ibid.,* 41-43 and 170; Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War (Hew* York, 1973), 230-233; Braisted, *USN in the Pacific,* 128, 143, 149 and 482; Pacific Fleet, "Administrative History," 12; US National Archives, *Records Relating to USN Fleet Problems* (Washington, 1975), 10-11.

6. See Betty M. Unterberger, *America's Siberian Expedition, 1918-1920* (New York, 1969).

7. Robert W. Love, Jr., *History of the US Navy,* (2 vols., Hamsburg, PA, 1992), I, 597-598, 602.

8. Pacific Fleet, "Administrative History," 13-19.

9. US, 76th Congress, 1st Session, *Report on Need for Additional Naval Bases....* (hereafter cited as *Hepburn Report),* House of Representatives Report 65 (Washington, 1938), 20-22, 31.

10. See base histories in Paolo Coletta (ed.), *United States Navy and Marine Corps Bases, Domestic* (Westport, CT, 1985); Pacific Fleet, "Administrative History," 23.

11. B. Mitchell Simpson, III, *Admiral Harold R. Stark: Architect of Victory, 1939-1945* (Columbia, SC, 1989), 5-6.

12. Miller, *War Plan Orange,* 334-335.

13. Brian Garfield, *The Thousand-Mile War: World War II in Alaska and the Aleutians* (Garden City, NY, 1969), 59; Samuel E. Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II* (15 vols., Boston, 1947-1962), IV, 165; Gilbert N. Tucker, *The Naval Service of Canada: Its Official History {2* vols., Ottawa, 1952), II, 229. A recent and basic reference on the North Pacific War is Kevin Hutchison, *World War II in the North Pacific: Chronology and Fact Book* (Westport, CT, 1994).

14. Grace P. Hayes, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II: The War Against Japan* (Annapolis, 1982), 131-135; Morison, *History of USN,* IV, 161-162; Hisashi Takahashi, "Japanese Campaign in Alaska" (Unpublished paper presented to the "Alaska at War" Conference, Anchorage, AK, November 1993).

15. See Morison, *History of USN,* IV, 163-180; Joseph Schull, *Far Distant Ships: An Official Account of Canadian Naval Operations in World War II* (Toronto, 1987), 122-23.

16. Sources on this campaign include *Ibid.,* 175-184; Garfield, *Thousand-Mile War,* 24-44; John H. Cloe, *The Aleutian Warriors: A History of the Ilth Air Force and Fleet Air Wing 4* (Missoula, MT, 75-143; Elmer Freeman, *Those Navy Guys and Their PBYs: The Aleutian Solution* (Spokane, 1992), 72-117; and Frederick D. Parker, *A Priceless Advantage: US Navy Communications Intelligence and the Battle of the Coral Sea, Midway, and the Aleutians* (Fort Meade, MD, 1993).

17. Hayes, *History of JCS,* 131, 172-173. For the importance of Lend-Lease, see Robert H. Jones, 77ie *Roads to Russia: United States Lend-Lease to the Soviet Union* (Norman, OK, 1969).

18. Morison, *History of USN,* VII, 8-9; Gerald E. Wheeler, "Thomas C. Kinkaid," Ms. in Naval Historical Center, Washington DC. Chapter 12 of this comprehensive biography, to be published in 1995 by the Naval Historical Center, covers the Admiral's tour as the North Pacific commander.

19. Morison, *History of USN,* VII, 65; Clay Blair, *Silent Victory: The US Submarine War Against Japan* (Philadelphia, 1975), 416-421.

20. See, Wheeler, "Thomas C. Kinkaid," chapter 12; Morison, *History of USN,* VII, 9-21, 37-66; Cloe, *Aleutian Warriors,* 322 and *passim.*

21. Wheeler, "Thomas C. Kinkaid," chapter 12.

22. Morison, *History of USN,* VII, 22-36; Garfield, *Thousand-Mile War,* 171-179; John P. Lorelli, *The Battle of the Komandorski Islands, March 1943* (Annapolis, 1984).

23. Morison, *History of USN,* VII, 37-51; Garfield, *Thousand-Mile War,* 256, 299.

24. Morison, *History of the USN,* VII, 56-65.

25. *Ibid.,* VII, 64-66.

26. Hayes, *History of the JCS,* 482-484, 496; Nimitz to Commander, North Pacific, 7 January 1944, in Pacific Fleet, "Administrative History," 138-140.

27. Hayes, *History of the JCS,* 484-486, 493, 496, 672-676; US Navy, *Building the Navy's Bases in World War II* (2 vols., Washington, 1947), II, 163-190; Naval Historical Center, *US Naval Experience in the North Pacific During World War II: Selected Documents* (Washington, 1989), 44-75; Otis Hays, Jr., *Home From Siberia: The Secret Odysseys of Interned American Airmen in World War II* (College Station, TX, 1990), 97-117; David Rees, *The Soviet Seizure of the Kuriles* (New York, 1985), 46-47; and Katherine L. Herbig, "American Strategic Deception in the Pacific, 1942-44," in Michael I. Handel (ed.), *Strategic and Operational Deception in the Second World War* (London, 1987), 264-281.

28. Rees, *Soviet Seizure of the Kuriles,* 61 -62, 72-73, 78-82; Hayes, *History of the JCS,* 672-676, 684-685; Jones, *Roads to Russia,* x-xi; G. Patrick March, "Yanks in Siberia: US Navy Weather Stations in Soviet East Asia, 1945," *Pacific Historical Review,* LVII (1988), 327-342.

29. Miller, *War Plan Orange,* 334-335.

30. Morison, *History of USN,* VII, 3.

31. Jones, *Roads to Russia,* 290.

32. Quoted in Pacific Fleet, "Administrative History," 302.