P.S. to the NEWS
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U.S. VS. U.S.S.R. NAVIES

The newsphoto of Mrs. John Glenn christening the new Trident submarine called the "Ohio" in Groton, Connecticut, while 3,000 demonstrators protested the event, may have misled some Americans into believing that the U.S. Navy is still the greatest and most up-to-date in the world. It isn't. One boat does not make a Navy.

The "Ohio" is not scheduled to be delivered to the Navy until November 1980 or to be deployed as part of our nuclear deterrent until August 1981. The Soviets already have 27 Trident-class submarines operational, and by the time the Ohio reaches the water, the Soviets will have 30 Trident-class submarines at sea.

Even on paper, our Pentagon plans to build only about 10 Tridents. Few will hazard a guess as to when or whether that number will ever come about, at the current snail's pace of production.

The Soviet Trident-class submarine, called the Delta, carries the world's first SLICBM (Submarine-Launched Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile), having a range of at least 4,500 miles (or even 5,000 miles). It can reach every significant target and city in the United States with missiles fired from the home water ports of the U.S.S.R.

The depressing contrast between our planned Trident "force" and the presently-existing Delta force is only one aspect of U.S. naval inferiority to the Soviet Union. The Soviets now have a total of 90 ballistic missile-firing submarines prowling the seas -- almost twice the number of ours -- and they are building more. Our 41 Polaris and Poseidon submarines are all relatively old and their missiles have a range 1,700 to 2,000 miles shorter than the Soviet Delta's missiles.

The Soviets have the world's largest attack submarine fleet -- 200 submarines available for anti-submarine and anti-shipping missions. All are torpedo-armed and nearly 70 of them are also armed with anti-surface ship cruise missiles. We have only 77 torpedo-armed submarines.

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The Soviets have more cruisers, more destroyers, more escort ships, and more amphibious ships than we have. They outnumber us by 850 to 15 in small attack boats. They have the largest naval mine warfare force in the world.

The Soviets have the world's largest fleet of intelligence gatherers. Their 50 spy ships are in constant surveillance near our submarine bases, our missile test center, the world's strategic waterways, and everywhere our Navy sails. We have no such intelligence collection fleet, having opted out of the business after the North Koreans seized our "Pueblo."

When the USS Francis Scott Key, a Poseidon submarine, test-fired a new Trident missile from underneath the Atlantic Ocean on April 10, which malfunctioned 30 seconds later, a Soviet ship was close by. How did the Russians know the time and place of that underwater launching?

It is bad enough that the Soviet Navy is superior to ours in numbers, in modern construction, in missile range, and in onboard weapons. But the disparity becomes overwhelming when we consider the different purpose and mission of the two navies.

The United States is really an island nation. We depend on the uninterrupted flow of essential raw materials and energy. Of 47 essential raw materials, we import 46 including nearly half our oil; and 99 percent of our overseas trade is carried by ship. Our Navy's mission, in addition to national defense, is to keep those commercial sea lanes open.

The Soviet Union, by contrast, is relatively self-sufficient in energy and raw materials. The Warsaw Pact nations are contiguous and can supply each other by land. Unless the Soviets have expansionist objectives, they have no need for an expensive blue water navy.

Furthermore, it takes fewer ships to interrupt the sea lanes than to keep them open. It takes fewer ships to threaten the peace than to keep the peace. Yet our Navy has fewer ships than at any time since before Pearl Harbor, and the Soviet Union has more ships than any nation in history.

The need is clear. We must rebuild our U.S. Navy if we want to keep Island America afloat -- politically, economically, and militarily.

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