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Continental Hegemony and the Geopolitics of Island Basing

A Preliminary Approach to Ethnic Identification and Political Mobilization in Militarized Island Communities

Introduction

In the wake of several recent instances of regional conflict involving small island communities, an ongoing reappraisal of the role of insular areas in the international system on the part of major continental powers can be noted. Long disregarded as having played at most a peripheral role in world affairs, mainly associated with rather myopic visions of earthly paradise and often the butt-end of disparaging jokes, these areas are increasingly becoming the focus of serious — and often conflicting — continental interests. The Falkland war in 1982, the US invasion of Grenada in 1984, the sharp US response to Soviet efforts to negotiate fishing agreements with various Pacific island states throughout the eighties, the ongoing violent confrontation between France and Kanak nationalists in New Caledonia, and the wide attention given in Western media to Rabuka's double coup in Fiji last year, are all measures of growing continental concern for insular affairs. Other relevant instances include the French-Comoran controversy since 1975 over the status of Mayotte, continental embroilment in the seccesionist rising on Espiritu Santo in conjunction with Vanuatu's declaration of independence in 1980, the South-Africa implicated coup-attempt in the Seychelles in 1981, and the repeated and drastic efforts on the part of the US to force an abrogation of the nuclear-free constitution of Belau, culminating in a final press-gang plebiscite in August of last year. Situations of longer standing are the protracted efforts of France, on the one hand, to maintain a presence — nuclear and otherwise — in the Pacific, and of the United States, on the other hand, to establish lasting control over the remaining island states of Micronesia.

Though widely disparate, it will be argued in the following pages that these and other instances of island-related conflict exhibit a sufficient range of common denominators to justify the treatment of island-continent relations as a distinct problem area of conflict research. Specifically, the aim of this paper is to outline the empirical and theoretical context for a future, more comprehensive study on the historical role of continental military establishments in the economic, social and political development of small, isolated island communities.

This is not a problem of only regional interest. Recent military developments in the superpower equation — what may best be described as a shift in strategic geography — is likely to put the issue of island-continent relations on the disarmament agenda as well. In recent years we have witnessed a gradual reorientation from the traditional Central European theatre of superpower confrontation toward ocean theatres such as the North Sea and Arctic areas, the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. The origins of this development are, not surprisingly, the cause of much controversy. Whatever the cause or causes, however, the growing focus on maritime strategic issues is already having an impact on island areas, colliding with local autonomist sentiments and causing stress within the Western alliance in particular.

An understanding of this problem cannot be found simply in an analysis of prevailing structures, but must be sought in history — both with regard to the military use of island territory and the emergence of island autonomism. As Allan Macartney points out, "it was the world-wide expansion of European naval power, mopping up 'unclaimed' territory by planting flags on coral strands and cold rocks, that was responsible for creating a series of problem categories which subsequently became candidates for the reverse movement of decolonialization."[1] While this initial study is largely concerned with contemporary events, it is the thesis that their common denominator is to be found in the perusal of history that justifies the theme.

This paper is didvided into three distinct parts. The first, *Island-Continent Relations as an Ethno-Regional Problem*, raises the issue of island autonomism and antimilitarism as two functions of continental hegemony. As off-shore islands historically have been of greater strategic than economic interest to continental powers, it is suggested that continental presence has predominantly been of military — and therefore of relatively uniform — character. It is argued that this common experience of a dominant continental military presence has contributed to the evolution of similar expressions of regional identity in island communities otherwise — geographically, culturally, historically — far removed from each other. A series of queries outlining the context and direction of further empiric and theoretical study concludes part one.

The purpose of parts two and three is not so much to provide answers to these queries as a background to the issues they raise. Part two, *Continental Hegemony and Island Microstates*, is intended as a general introduction to the historical nature of island-continent relations. The meaning and import of insularity is discussed as a function of continental versus insular bias, reflected in the perception and administration of insular affairs. The emergence of island microstates is discussed. As these new nations begin to enjoy the rights of statehood, including UN membership and the prerogative of exclusive economic zones, they are increasingly seen as a political and economic threat as well as a strategic liability to continental interests. Economic rivalries over marine resources are coupled to superpower rivalries over maritime control.

Part three, *The Geopolitics of Island Basing*, focuses the discussion on the

strategic dimension of island continent relations, and seeks to establish the role of island areas in geopolitical theory and current strategy. It is argued that island bases are administratively, operationally as well as politically distinguishable from continental overseas bases.

This study focuses primarily on the continental perception and exploitation of island areas. Of equal interest is the question of how the continental presence affects the local use, what impact military activities have on local life, and how these factors are reflected in the islanders' attitudes. In addition, this study does not discuss any divergent island communities where developments contradict the hypotheses presented in this paper — a very major flaw. I refer, however, to my subtitle. This is only a preliminary approach. I do not consider the present amalgam of hypothesis and extrapolations from available — mostly secondary — sources to be anything more than a sketch. Even as such, however, it is perhaps not without interest. At the risk of sounding droll, I would like to reiterate a simple maxim: before we can resolve a problem, we must first define it. Before we can provide an answer, in the form of some grand and glorious theory, we must first ask the relevant question. This, and nothing else, is what I have set out to do here.

Island-Continent Relations as an Ethno-Regional Problem

Autonomism and Antimilitarism

A manifest trend in island-continent relations is the growth of autonomist sentiment in a number of off-shore island areas around the globe. Such sentiment, ranging from relatively moderate demands for increased self-rule within a national union to radical demands for full independence, has triggered political change in the European fringe, in the Caribbean, in the Indian Ocean, in the Pacific.

From a theoretical point of view, such autonomism can be described as belonging to two dimensions: geographic (the separation by water of the insular community and its continental metropole) and ethnic (the emergence of an island identity distinct from that of the metropole). As an expression of what Johan Galtung describes as "fission in the territorial system," island autonomism seems therefore to comply with the general pattern for secessionist struggle (Galtung)[2] or ethno-regional conflict (Sven Tägil).[3]

With these parameters of ethnicity and geography it becomes possible to compare national struggle in Western Samoa or Vanuatu, for example, with that in Kenya or Zimbabwe; or autonomous rule in the Faroes with that in Friuli; or race relations in New Caledonia with those in South Africa. It may be relevant to compare the division of Mayotte from the Comores with that of Ulster from Eire. In other words, island autonomism and political disenfranchisement can be seen in the larger context of decolonialization, as the extension and logical

conclusion of a universal process. This is the context in which island decolonialization and related problems usually are discussed.[4]

But an equally manifest trend in island-continent relations, concomitant with this autonomism, is the growth of a political phenomenon we more readily associate with the industrialized nations: antimilitarism. Though occuring in far from all island communities, the prevalence of such sentiment in island areas is of a degree that warrants scrutiny. Forty years of anti-base demonstrations in Iceland, a generation of anti-nuclear protest in French Polynesia, opposition to continental military presence voiced — from grass-roots level to highest level of local government — in the Faroes, Hawaii, the Marshall Islands, the Maldives, Guam, Greenland, Belau: there is a pattern that does not correspond to the conventional models of secessionist movement. The broad Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) movement, for example, is by continental observers more often associated with the American and European peace movements than with the nationalist or anticolonial movements that in an earler period played such an important part in the political enfranchisement of former colonial areas in Africa and Asia. But as its name implies, NFIP is also an independence movement: the islands in the Pacific, in common with the North Atlantic and Caribbean islands, constitute the last remnants of colonial rule. For the islanders, therefore, antimilitarism and anticolonialism are linked. How?

A first step would be to establish some sort of basis for a comparison of island areas. As Arthur Westing has noted, this is not as simple as it sounds:

> It is, of course, difficult to make any meaningful generalizations that would be applicable to the many thousands of oceanic islands in the world. One need only reflect upon the ramifications of the following parameters in order to recognize the complexities involved in categorizing islands; (a) their size, ranging from tiny to virtually continental; (b) their degree of isolation, especially their distance from some mainland; (c) their origin and age, that is, whether they rose from the sea or separated from the mainland, and the lenght of time that has elapsed since their birth; (d) their geomorphology and topography, especially whether they are 'high' (either of continental or volcanic origin) or 'low'(of coral origin); (e) their climate, especially their rainfall status...and temperature regime; (f) their state of human habitation, that is whether they are uninhabited or inhabited and, if the latter, whether by primitive or modern peoples, and by how many; and (g) their past use or exploitation, and thus their present degree of disturbance.[5]

Some of the parameters Westing gives here, such as (d) or (e) seem peripheral to a study on the societal aspects of island — continent relations. But it is precicely such mundane matters as topography and climate that determine the limits to human habitation, and thus also to continental colonization. And it is of course this colonization that is the key to island-continent conflicts. Let us then try to identify the actors, for, as Tägil points out,

> Like other conflicts in society, ethno-regional conflict presuppose identifiable parties to the conflict. The ethnic group which raises demands and acts for increased control over a certain territory does so vis-à-vis specific opposite parties... The constitution of specific counter-parties to the ethno-national group which has raised demands is, naturally, of importance for conflict development, as well as the choice of coalition parties, be they ethnically defined or of other type.[6]

If we acknowledge island-continent conflicts as ethno-regional conflicts, we would expect, therefore, that the expression of island autonomism would reflect the expression of continental presence. Let us therefore begin by asking the question: what have islands to offer to justify continental intrusion in the first place?

Barring that sometime happy minority of island realms blessed with native gold — kouri shells, guano, spices, off-shore oil and gas — these small and distant parcels of land have in and of themselves never really had much to offer anyone from continental shores bent on large scale civil enterprise. Too small to support profitable industry, too distant, at any rate, to be incorporated into trade without adding a disproportionate share to transport costs, such islands might very well have remained in peaceful and profitless obscurity were it not for the circumstance that they commonly lie *en route* to other, more lucrative parts. And as points of relay, offering such strategic advantages as protected harbours, fresh water — or food — or a piece of land on which to build a coaling station, a landing strip or a communications facility — even the most barren and improbable rocks were, over the ages, to become the focus of colonial rivalries in ever widening circles of European expansion. From Malta to Guam, this colonial wave brought soldiers rather than settlers. Rather than plantations, harbours were built, forts, battlements, gun stores and the whole paraphenalia of military infrastructure. While agriculture and fishing may have remained the economic mainstay of the local community, where there was one, the continental presence was, by and large, of military character. And so, conversly, would it not stand to reason that where strategic rather than economic considerations have dictated the nature of continental hegemony, island autonomist sentiments, when present, will take on an antimilitary expression?

This supposition opens vistas for inquiry of both empiric-specific and wider theoretical nature. In the following pages, some possible lines for further research will be outlined.

Some Thoughts on the Militarization of Islands

First of all, as island manifestations of antimilitarism seem to echo the sentiments of continental peace movements, and as news of military activities in island areas — if at all — generally reach a wider audience through the diligence of continental peace activists or peace researchers, insular protests

against continental military presence are invariably received in the context of peace and disarmament as defined by continental pundits. Issues of local concern, often typical to island communities, are easily lost in the discussion of the paramount global concern of nuclear disarmament. The result is often a conflict of priorities, latent or explicit, as I have had occasion to note at venues where representatives of insular and continental interest groups have met to share views, such as the 1983 and 1984 END North Atlantic Network conferences in Glasgow and Reykjavík and the 1984 Beyond ANZUS conference in Wellington. As the strategic value of island real estate continues to rise, so does the purely local pressure of the military on limited island socio-economic infrastructures. We can readily imagine the destruction left in the Pacific in the wake of forty years of nuclear testing. But in the small-scale and precisely balanced economies of island societies, even a discreet presence, such as a navigation facility, can cause deep and lasting changes in island life. Such changes are not necessarily for the worse. Civil use of the US Loran-C navigational system for the strategic submarine fleet, which includes a main transmitter on the Faroes, for example, has contributed greatly to the efficacy of the Faroese fishing fleet, with considerable impact on island economy, demography and social life as a consequence.[7] The problem is that such developments imply the incorporation of military systems in the local economy, with a greater or lesser degree of dependence as an inescapable corollary. What happens when the military pulls out; when a particular installation on a particular island — or the island itself — becomes militarily obsolete? What will happen, for instance, when the US soon stops providing for the maintenance of the Loran-C system, already being eclipsed by the satellite-borne Navstar system?[8] In other words, irregardless of whatever global issues may be at stake, the militarization — and occasional demilitarization — of island communities constitutes a problem akin to that raised by economic colonialism, where the military — in the absence of economic interests — provides the face and instrument of continental hegemony. Insular manifestations of antimilitarism, therefore, deserve scrutiny not just in the global context of disarmament but also, perhaps especially, in the local context of decolonialization.

Secondly, the claim of continental military establishments to access rights to distant island territory raises an interesting question of principle, namely how to reconcile our cherished, liberal conception of self-determination, rather basic to the political rationale of our present world order, with the pragmatic imperatives of our equally cherished security. We'll leave the ethics of nuclear deterrence to be sorted out by the pundits referred to above. Let us instead consider the mechanics of the thing. Deterrence means bombs, delivery systems, bases, communication systems. Bombs need to be tested, so do delivery systems; bases require real-estate; communication systems consist largely of antennae, and antennae need to be planted somewhere. For a variety of very practical reasons, islands, particularly small, distant ones, are immensly suitable to host many such essential functions. If such is the case (we could argue), are not these small,

insular peoples, these peripheral minorities, morally obliged to sacrifice their claim to land and sovereignty for the common good of nuclear parity, etc? But if so, how small is small? Local impact of our common defense requirements is a price we all have to pay these days, though we tend to regard it a matter of national consensus. But if the wishes of a clear majority of Belauan voters can repeatedly be disregarded by a powerful continental power in the name of global security, to take a recent example,[9] why not the wishes of a majority of Icelanders, or Maltans — or New Zealanders, or Frenchmen? The microstate problem seems to offer ample scope for a discussion of problems now troubling many larger states, not the least minor alliance partners.

Thirdly, there is a tradition in the social sciences to use ethnographic case studies of island communities as bases for theoretical formulations of a more general nature. In studying the dynamics of various specific aspects of societal interaction, the complexity of modern society presents a serious hindrance. There are simply too many variables. The limitations imposed by geography on the size and complexity of island communities, on the other hand, provides an opportunity to discover and define structures that may be invisible or difficult to isolate in larger societies, much as the limitations of geography on the range and complexity of Galapagos fauna provided, in Darwin's classic study, an opportunity to observe and identify the process of natural selection. Such case studies may or may not yield results that can be abstracted and applied elsewhere. It is obviously not a question of simple mechanical correlation; the point is not primarily to provide answers but to inspire lines of further inquiry. Bronislaw Malinowsky's study of the magic rites of Trobriand Islanders, or Margaret Mead's work on Samoan sexual and gender relations, to mention the two most celebrated examples, have both spawned schools of study that span far beyond the realm of Melanesian or Polynesian anthropology. There is no reason why such application of case studies cannot bear fruit also in the realm of conflict research. The present study does not presume to set an example, but simply to discuss some instances where further empiric study might yield results of wider interest.

At present I can identify three areas where such application may be of interest. Of particular interest to this study is the problem pertaining to the political voice of small, isolated communities in a wider sense. The term insularity, as an expression of geographic or ethnic isolation, can just as well be applied to remote frontier settlements or to Fourth World communities in continental interiors as to off-shore island communities. In particular in the case of Fourth World — First World relations may a parallel to island-continent relations have some relevance, especially in the instance of the many indigenous island communities where the issues overlap. Greenland, for instance, may in light of geographic and administrative circumstances be discussed in the theoretical context of island — continent relations, whereas an ethnological — or political — approach would favour a regional context emphasizing the ethnic unity of the transcontinental "archipelago" of Inuit peoples. The central question here is how

"island-continent relations" (speaking in a wider, analogous sense) are established and on what premises they are maintained. A familiar pattern seems to spell out that "continental" expansion into "insular" areas hinges on discovery of some desireable resource, the exploitation of which invariably infringes on the traditional economy and cultural cohesion of the indigenous population, leading to a situation of competition and conflict. This is not just in reference to some sordid colonial past. As eskimologist Jens Brøsted noted at a seminar on "The Small Nations in the North in International and Constitutional Law" held in Tórshavn in June 1983, "large scale mineral and petroleum extraction — in fact or in terms of industry projects and government hopefull expectations — has in recent years been one of the main sources of conflict between indigenous peoples and the larger society encompassing them."[10]

If we now as here suggest that resources can be defined in strategic as well as in economic terms — implying that where a region's economic value is exceeded by the value of its strategic location, military rather than commercial interests will dictate the shape and direction of "continental" expansion — a reasonable corollary might be that as a model for "continental" hegemony, the militarization of "island communities" can have application to cases of intrusion by economic interests — and vice versa. In fact, it could be argued that both instances provide specific examples of what in a general context may be described as the mechanics of centre-periphery relationships. To return to the case of Greenland, Brøsted's studies suggest an analogy between Danish commercial mining interests and US strategic interest in maintaining the Thule air base: both raise the issue of compensation, both have been the focus of partisan and regional political dissent; both have provided impetus for ethnic identification and political mobilization on the part of the Inuit community. There is no dearth of similar cases. Whether discussing uranium mining on Navajo land in New Mexico, or road building through tribal territory in Brazil's Rondônia, or Army land purchases on Tinian in the Marianas, the issues, on a local level, seem to have sufficient in common to warrant comparison within the framework of a tentative "insularity."

Another application may be to the discussion of the general nature of the militarization process.[11] The problems raised by the incorporation of military systems in the social and economic fabric of a society are not, of course, unique to small island communities. But the role of the military as a socio-economic force is dicey at best to gauge in complex societies such as ours. In island areas, with limited, often extremely limited space, access to land is a measure of relative strength. Furthermore, with limited resources and small populations, such areas provide hardly ever the economic basis for anything more than one major producer of revenue, usually an export crop such as fish or copra.[12] The establishment of a continental military presence independent of the local economy, therefore, signifies the creation of a relatively simple bipolar system, where the impact of the military on the local community can be correlated to measurable changes in the ownership of land, employment, financial aid, export figures, etc.

The fact that it constitutes an extreme does not necessarily make the island community uninteresting in this regard.

A third and final application concerns the misty problem of ethnicity. When expressed in terms of global or regional security, the imperative of continental access to island territory becomes, on an international scale, simply a question of majority rule — or, as perceived from the other end of the stick, of "dictatorship of the majority" — much as when, on a national scale, the heartland of an ethnic minority is expropriated in the name of national security. Under such circumstances, how relevant is the concept of national security to the minority in question? By the same token, how relevant can continental security interests be to an insular community which perceives such interests as intrinsically incompatible with its own survival? The central question here is to what extent the island population perceives itself as distinct from the continental community to which it — via political affiliation and the technological structures of military presence — supposedly owes its allegiance. In other words, *if* island antimilitarism can be considered a viable indicator of ethnic or regional identification, does such mobilization presuppose group identity or does it constitute the process whereby such identity is established? The question of ethnic identity is often very complex in the case of island communities, not seldom comprised of a broad mix of distinct groups of ancient as well as of recent origin, often exhibiting loyalties to ethnic kin on the mainland. The degree to which manifestations of island antimilitarism constitutes united front, so to speak, is therefore of great interest in gauging the evolution of common loyalties and, by extension, of nascent regional identification. As a contemporary focus of island-continent conflict, controversy over a military presence might thereby provide the seed from which an island or inter-island identity may crystallize — such as in the case of the NFIP movement — providing, perhaps, a glimpse of ethnicity in the making. On the other hand: where do such manifestaions arise? Is antimilitarism typical to ethnically homogenous island communities (Iceland) or to specific ethnic groups within heterogenous island communities (Hawaii).

The problems raised here span wide, yet all stem from a common root: the historical importance of off-shore island areas in naval strategy. Though much has changed since the trireme, island basing remains a central element in this regard, and as such is a key factor in the development of island-continent relations. But before turning to the strategic issues at stake, a more general discussion of the nature of these relations seems warranted.

Continental Hegemony and Island Microstates

> Thorshavn, the town of my birth, is remarkable neither for its outward beauty, a spectacular location, nor for any extraordinary accomplishments. It is nothing but a bit of country town between sea and highland moor. But this speck is not only the capital of an entire little island realm and the largest town for hundreds of kilometers round; like every part on earth where men and women are born and grown to adulthood, it can also make a claim of being the very navel of the world. This is where sun and moon made their first appearance, it was here that night and day were formed. From a dormer window in old Thorshavn you first exchanged a glance with the Seven Sisters and felt infinity's kiss on your brow.
>
> Besides the Pleiades and other heavenly bodies, one could also see a piece of the planet Tellus, the wet star, from which' sun-steeped waters all of creation arose in the dawn of time. There was scarcely anything but water as far as the eye could see. But out toward the sides some spits of land emerged as well, everlasting profiles, the world's beginning and end.
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> — William Heinesen[13]

"A Part of the Main"

Common to all the instances of island-related conflict mentioned in the introduction is the direct or indirect involvement of continental powers in the local execution of political authority. This is hardly surprising: all such areas are, or were until quite recently, dependent colonies of continental states. (The Kingdom of Tonga, never colonized though administered as a British protectorate from 1900 to 1970, being a notable exception.) What is surprising is that despite the common denominators of small size, insularity and continental rule, there has until very recently been little interest in gathering in these areas under a common heading for the purposes of comparison. Historians, geographers and political scientists alike tend to follow the lead of colonial administrators and file islands as national subunits of continental metropoles or as geographic splinters of proximate continental areas. Iceland, the Faroes and the Azores belong clearly to Europe; the Canary Islands, Cabo Verde, St. Helena and Ascencion to Africa, whereas Madeira vacillates between the two, depending on authority. Mauritius, Réunion and the Comores, satellites of Madagascar, lie within the greater confines of Africa, as do — according to most — the Seychelles. The Maldives on the other hand, like the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, seem instead to be orbiting the Indian subcontinent while, as unlikely as it may seem, the Chagos Archipelago, formerly a British dependency administered from Mauritius, has with the establishment of the Diego Garcia naval base bypassed India and joined the Pacific as a lonely outpost of the US Pacific Command. The small islands of the Caribbean present a confusing case. Apparently too poor and too black to be considered part of North America, they are commonly lumped with Central America except when the latter is subsumed along with South America under the Latin American billing. Only the islands of the Pacific have been

deemed worthy a common heading by virtue of the great distance between them and anywhere else. But even Oceania is littered with the inconsistencies of a rough draft, such as its figmented border with Asia, to take a controversial example, which is popularly drawn straight through the jungles of New Guinea in disregard of both geographic and ethnic considerations, though in keeping with the more accidental decree of colonial surveyors. Or the suggestion on the part of the geostrategically rather prickly Ecuador and Chile that this Pacific sphere does not include Easter Island, Sala y Gomez and the Galapagos Islands, which along with assorted other such easterly skerries instead properly belong to greater South America...

Furthermore, the legacy of a confusing mix of colonial régimes makes a comparison of island areas along political or administrative lines difficult at best. The Pacific region, with its 22 governments for 6 million people (Australia and New Zealand excluded) is a case in point. Political structures here are more diverse than for any equivalent population in the world. They include: a kingdom (Tonga), a state where only chiefs may vote or be elected (Western Samoa), nine republics (among them Nauru, the world's smallest, and Kiribati, in spread one of the world's largest), five associated states (Cook Islands and Niue, under New Zealand's guardianship, and Belau, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands, still held in strategic trust by the United States), a federal state (Hawaii), an incorporated territory (Guam), an unincorporated territory (the Northern Marianas), two departments (New Caledonia and French Polynesia), two territories (Wallis & Futuna and Tokelau), a province (West Irian), and several other forms such as Easter Island, constitutionally "an integral part of Chile."[14]

In other island areas such as the European fringe or the Caribbean, the situation is analogous, though not quite as extreme. Certainly as the trend towards increased autonomy and independence continues, this erratic state of affairs will tend to even out, as in other areas where decolonialization has already been effected. To a certain extent a greater regional cohesion has been achieved with the establishment and growing authority of inter-island organisations such as the Caribbean Caricom, the South Pacific Forum and the European Conference on Peripheral Maritime Regions (CRPM).[15]

Against this splintered background, where outlying island areas are associated with continental metropoles or distinctly demarcated geographic zones, it may seem artificial to try to group them under a single heading. But by the same token, could it not be argued that the divisions of traditional political geography, reflecting the bias of centuries of eurocentric cosmology and cartography, is as much an artifice?[16] This splintering is not intrinsic but functional, and in the same way a gathering of island areas under a common heading is functional but to a different end.

The problem is that the continental view of island areas, with the continent or metropole in the centre and the islands in the periphery, has itself become intrinsic to our understanding of the word "island," and thereby also to our

understanding of island-continent relations. Consider, as a brief example, the symbolic value of the word, such as in the now rather threadworn lines from Donne from which the subheading above is borrowed: "No man is an *Island*, entire of it self; every man is a piece of the *Continent*, a part of the *main*..." The image of "island" — with all its associations, the coconut Paradise, the Noble Savage — presupposes, as a point of reference, the image of "continent." Only for a native-born can the island be "the very navel of the world." When we speak of islands, therefore, we must first declare our bias — continental or insular — much as we, in resolving cultural clashes, must begin by acknowledging our ethnocentricity.

"*Like Beads on a String*"

What is an island to us, then? How do we understand the term? Consider the case of the scattered enclaves, insular and coastal, established by the colonial powers during the period of expansion. Macartney writes,

> If it is accessability by sea by an oceangoing navy which was responsible for the present status of many islands...then is it not equally applicable to peninsulas such as Gibraltar or sea ports such as Ceuta or Melilla, not to mention the old forts along the coast of West Africa? Was there really a difference between the Fort of St John the Baptist, a Portuguese enclave in Dahomey, and the isle of Gorée in Senegal?[17]

The implication is that there wasn't — from the point of view of the maritime powers that had established these forts. The siting of a naval facility, a trading post — or a modern airfield or tanker port for that matter — is, in the end, determined by three factors: purpose, suitability, and availability. The siting on an island can be a matter of choice — it may, for instance, offer a suitable (mid-ocean or coastal) anchorage, or a defensive advantage by virtue of its relative inaccessability — or of necessity — it may be the only site available, for reasons political or topographic. If Gibraltar were separated from the Spanish mainland by a channel, it may have strengthened the British claim today, but it would neither have added to nor detracted from the enclave's strategic position in any remarkable way. Indeed, for the intents and puposes of the Admiralty and the Colonial Office, Gibraltar *is* an island, as insulated from Andalusia as Malta is from either Italy or Libya or, for that matter, Aden long was from its Yemenite hinterland. From the point of view of London, such *points d'appui* are — or were — all islands, separated from the political main by oceans of potentially hostile territory, whether under the jurisdiction of continental governments or of Neptune is a practical distinction of subordinate concern. They constitute, the few that remain, a political rather than a geographic archipelago.

Or consider the impact of modern communications: thanks to them, insularity is no longer synonymous with isolation. According to Macartney, "it is easier to reach, say, the Aleutian Islands or Fiji than the highlands of Lesotho or the middle of the Gobi dessert. [...] Is then the idea that islands are 'special' a mis-

conception, a hangover from an age before the invention of roll-on/roll-off ferries and the building of innumerable airstrips?"[18] To paraphrase him: if it is accessability by air and and a well-developed tourist industry which is responsible for the present status of many islands in the Caribbean and the Mediterranean, then is it not equally applicable to tourist strips along the Florida coast or the Riviera? Is there really a difference between Torremolinos, on the Costa del Sol, and Playa del Inglés, on Gran Canaria? The modern charter tourist, whose vacation world rarely extends beyond the organized reef defined by airport, hotel, beach and shopping arcade, reiterates in modern parlance the pragmatic attitude of an earlier epoch's colonial administrators. From his point of view, geographic insularity is irrelevant because it does not affect his access; it is in fact invisible.

For the islander, however, the situation is not so simple. For one thing, continental access to island areas does not mean insular access to continental areas. Modern air travel can be likened to a toll bridge: while the construction of an air terminal may bring the tourists in, it does not necessarily follow that the islanders come out. And if they do, they do not have the same choice of destinations: airline networks mostly follow the same colonial grids as before; the dichotomy island — continent remains in insular awareness.[19] For another thing, the lack of a hinterland puts clear limits on the economic and demographic growth potential of the island community, this in turn reinforcing dependence on continental metropoles. Furthermore, island areas are generally insulated from the winds of political change that sweep across continental areas (an interesting exception is the PAIGC alliance between Cabo Verde and Guinea Bissau during the liberation war against Portuguese rule[20]). When Norway was ceeded to the Swedish crown in the 1814 Treaty of Kiel, the Faroes, Iceland and Greenland, originally Norwegian territories, remained as fiefs of the Danish king. In a modern case, the Balearic Islands, Catalan speaking and historically part of "the Catalan land," were not covered by the 1932 Statute of Autonomy which reestablished the Generalitat: they remain administered from Madrid.[21]

Whereas Gibraltar may, like previously Aden, Goa and Ifni, one day be absorbed by its hinterland, this is obviously an impossible development for residual mid-ocean outposts like St. Helena or Ascension, or island provinces like the Faroes or the Azores. The question here is whether they have the inclination, the potential and — above all — the sanction to move towards increased autonomy or independence.

The Island Microstate

As these far flung islands constitute the last remnants of former colonial empires, the issue of decolonialization has with few exceptions become an exclusively insular affair in recent years. Herbert Corkran notes,

> Most of the later arrivals at the UN represent nations whose existence was made possible by the progressive dissolution of once-great colonial empires. As this historic process draws to a close through virtually running out of further territory to liberate, we are witnessing the production of smaller and smaller jurdical [sic] entities.[22]

And he goes on to quote Samuel De Palma, former US Assistant Secretary of State for International organizations in a statement from as early as 1969,

> The facts available to us shows a total of nearly 50 territories which may gain (or, in one or two cases, have gained) judicial independence, each of which has a population less than 100,000. In addition, there are about 15 somewhat larger territories, which would not necessarily be considered microstates...These 65 or so territories would have a grand total population of about 4,600,000. That means that all of these potential candidates for the U.N. membership added together muster fewer people than any one of the 69 most populous states now members of the U.N. They posess 0.2 per-cent of the total population of the present membership. Yet if they were added to the present membership, they would comprise nearly one-third of the votes in the General Assembly.[23]

Much has happened since De Palma vented his frustration, and the problems he foresaw (for the increasingly outvoted US) have led to intense interest in the microstate phenomenon, in particular among American political scientists.

In a study from 1977, Elmer Plischke gives a then-current status report. From 1966 to 1976, 16 micostates (using Plischke's criteria: see below) became independent.[24] What makes Pliscke's figures interesting is the insight they offers into the composition of this growing community of diminutive nations.

Plischke defines a microstate as a state or territory (always in the Plischkean view a candidate for statehood) with a population of up to 300,000. In appendices A ("Community of Nations") and B ("Potential Additions to Community of Nations"), he lists a total of 106 states or territories (excluding the unpopulated areas) which comply to this definition.[25] Of these, 91, or 86%, are island areas. Since then, 11—14 new states have joined the community of nations (depending on the status accorded the so-called associated states[26]). In keeping with the trend, all are microstates, and all, with the exception of Djibouti, Belize and Brunei, are insular.

These island microstates face a number of common threats. Because of their disproportionate representation in the UN they incur the dipleasure of continental states accustomed to wreathe their hegemony in the democratic form of majority-vote resolutions. Because of their insularity they are squeezed by competing claims to either dwindling or newly discoverd marine resources. A short background is here in order.

As the last natural frontier for economic expansion, ocean areas have become a Klondyke for rivaling continental interests. Diminishing fish stocks, legal disputes over fishing rights to highly migratory species such as tuna, new retrieval techniques for undersea mineral resources making full-scale off-shore exploration for the first time commercially attractive, and strategic as well as economic

interests in complementing Middle East oil reserves with new undersea sources are all developments which in recent years have been the focus of such rivalry. In such disputes, island areas are of immediate interest because of their 200-mile economic zones, favourable location as reference points for median lines through contested water areas, or suitability as sites for on-shore support facilities. Such considerations are of central importance in the case of conflicting claims over unpopulated or sparsely populated islands or rocks, such as Rockall, claimed by the United Kingdom and Eire; the Paracels, Spratly and other reefs in the South China Sea, claimed variously by China, Vietnam and the Philippines;[27] the Chagos Archipelago, claimed by the United Kingdom and Mauritius,[28] etc. On at least two occasions in recent years, the 1979—1984 Beagle Channel dispute between Chile and Argentina[29] and the 1982 Falkland war, such rivalry over island territory has led to armed conflict between continental states. Even where sovereignty is established, island areas may be the focus of contesting marine claims. The Nordic area offers all of three recent examples: Svalbard in a dispute between Norway and the Soviet Union over the delimitation of the Barents Sea;[30] Gotland in a similar dispute between Sweden and the Soviet Union over the delimitation of the Baltic;[31] Hesselø in a minor controversy between Sweden and Denmark over exploration rights in Southern Kattegatt.[32]

The emergence of the island microstates meant the almost overnight transformation of vast expanses of high sea into *mare clausum*, as the new states began to declare 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones in accordance with international praxis. For the island nations themselves, it was a matter of finally being able to reap the economic harvest of sovereignty. As Lt.Comm. Scott Allen writes in an unbiased article on the South Pacific in a 1987 issue of USNI *Proceedings*,

> The newly independent states hoped they had secured for themselves the economic benefits of the ocean fisheries that they had traditionally exploited and the unknown resources that ocean technology would make available in coming decades. By the international grant of sovereign rights over the ocean resources that surrounded them, they had taken a major step toward the economic independence necessary for them to bolster their newly won political independence.[33]

For continental powers, however, the new EEZs signified an infringement on already pressed claims, and a threat to the economic balance of such high-cost ventures as deep-sea mining projects. In the Pacific, disagreement between the island states and, in particular, the United States festered from 1976 to 1986, upsetting, among other things, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and leading to a tuna war that put the 1975—6 Cod War between Iceland and the United Kingdom to shame.[34]

These disputes, decisive for the ability of these small fishing-economies to survive independently of increasing — and increasingly entangling — continental backing, have yet another dimension. One effect of the hard-nosed US attitude has been that many of these microstates in the Pacific have been forced to look for alternative trade arrangements, including fishing agreements with the

Soviet Union. For the islands the issue is pragmatic, not ideological.[35] For the Soviet Union, there is undeniably an economic interest both in establishing fishing rights and on-shore processing facilities in the region, and to gain a toehold in an economically expanding region traditionally outside the Soviet sphere.[36] Strategic stakes are also involved, though opinions vary both as to Soviet priorities and to the degree these can be implemented.[37] For the United States, the danger of a growing Soviet presence, economic or military, in the US maritime sphere is a cause for alarm, and the response, with few exceptions (Allen's article is a voice in the wilderness) has been to sound the bugle and man the battlements in familiar order. Thus the bread-and-butter issue of fish and trade, inescapable reality for the islands, has with the appearance of Tweedledum and Tweedledee on the scene been transformed into a rather conventional superpower deadlock. In this continental context, the issue of who's gonna buy whose fish is yesterdays news.

And so we are back to the geopolitical equation. Continental concern for strategic access to and control of island areas is expressed even in their economic relations, perhaps because the economics involved are, from a continental point of view, so marginal that they provide no basis for an alternative policy. The common denominator for these island microstates, it seems, is that their prime resource, their strategic location, only can be exported at the price of their sovereignty.

The Geopolitics of Island Basing

> The council [sic] which Themistocles gave to Athens — Pompey to Rome — Cromwell to England — De Witt to Holland — and Colbert to France...That as the great question of commerce between nations and empires must be decided by a military marine, and war or peace are determined by sea, all reasonable encouragement should be given to a navy. The trident of Neptune is the sceptre of the world.
>
> — John Adams

A Note on Geopolitical Theory

It is with some trepidation that I introduce the term geopolitics in describing the strategic dimension of island-continent relations. While providing a ready conceptual framework to island basing in a historical perspective, it is at the same time a term open to wide interpretation and association. In particular in Northern and Central Europe, not the least in Scandinavia, has the term become associated with continentally oriented German strategic thinking from the prewar and World War 2 period. Obviously, this is not the context in which the term is used here. Instead I would refer to the application of the term in current US strategic thinking, with its predominatly maritime orientation, as exemplified in Harkavy's study.

If we keep to contemporary maritime application of the term, in particular with regard to the military use of island areas on the part of continental powers, it is inevitable that our discussion will center on island basing in US strategy. Used here, however, "geopolitics" is not intended as a signal of political or theoretical affiliation, nor as a reference to some current debate on the end and means of US national diplomacy, but simply as a generic expression for the historical role of geographic thinking in the military and political strategies of imperial powers through the ages, as applied, for example, in the concentric hierarchy of British colonial rule discussed in the preceeding chapter. In this light, such usage of the term as is now current in the United States[38] is only a specific, contemporary instance of a utilitarian, geographic approach to the administration of power that's been around since way before Themistocles sold Athens on the idea, even if the word itself is of recent origin.[39] In this century, geopolitical theory has swung between the two poles of Halfort Mackinder's "heartland" and Alfred T. Mahan's "rimland." Mackinder's *The Geographical Pivot of History* from 1904 provided fertile seed for a rich flora of geopolitical thought centered on the strategic preeminence of the Eurasian continental heartland and the natural rivalry between it and the rimland (or "marginal crescent" in Mackinder's terminology). In this tradition, akin to later formulations of centre-periphery relations but with a from a eurocentric perspective disturbing twist, Europe, the colonial nexus and cradle of civilization, is seen as peripheral to Russia. The horrific appeal of this alarming perspective was of course not diminished by the success of the October revolution. Stressing the primacy of land frontiers and land warfare, Mackinder's model with its myriad of permutations (including the German *Lebensraum* concept[40]), enjoyed great vogue during the first half of this century, but fell into disrepute after the war — partly tainted by its association with Nazi ideology, partly as its continental universe was shattered with the ascendancy of the "marginal" United States. As a model for continental area-specific studies, such as Lars-Erik Nyman's thesis on British, Chinese, Russian and Japanese interests in Sinkiang during the interwar period, however, it still offers a highly viable and relevant approach, aside from the light it sheds on current representations of the resilient eastern peril.[41]

Preceeding Mackinder's work by couple of decades, Mahan's *The Influence of Seapower Upon History, 1669—1783* (first published 1890) presents the same concentric image of the world, but emphasizes instead the maritime rimland. For Mahan it was naval power which held the key to geopolitical advantage, offering a balance to the land-based strength of Russia. As much as an antithesis to the Mackinderian view, therefore, Mahan's was a supplement to it, providing in the years to come a theoretical framework for US encirclement and containment policies. Whereas Mackinder saw control of the continental main as the ultimate factor deciding the global balance of power, Mahan favoured the control of the seas.[42]

While eclipsed to a great extent by the new geopolitical order imposed by

technology with the advent of strategic airpower,[43] both schools still provide a theoretical context to current strategic thinking, in particular with regard to the more specific regional application of land and sea warfare. In fact, "heartland" and "rimland" have come to constitute compatible frameworks for two distinct theatres of war. Seen in this light, geopolitics can be regarded as a theoretical — even ideological — sanction of geographic realities, expressed in the military strategies, basing policies, and even trade and production patterns of states. Such "geographic determinism" (the phrase is borrowed from Nyman) as expressed here implies simply that a state's tradition of geopolitical thinking, whether Mahan- or Mackinder-oriented, reflects the limits imposed by it on geography. Or as Clark Reynolds has put it:

> [E]ach nation tends to orient its political, economic and military life around the advantages of its geographical position vis-à-vis other nations. And history reveals that this orientation has usually favoured either the ocean — maritime element or the continental. No nation has yet been able to afford the sheer expense of sustaining both a large army to control its continental frontiers and a large army to maintain control over vast areas of water.[44]

This dichotomy pertains readily to the question of the role of seapower in Russian/Soviet contra British/US geopolitical thinking. Harkavy gives as example Russia's defeat to Japan at the naval battles of Port Arthur and Tsushima in 1905, mainly due (and here he quotes from Admiral Gorshkov's *The Sea Power of the State*) the inability of the Czarist government to recognize the importance (as did its British counterpart) of well-spaced overseas coaling stations to enable the free disposition of naval forces from sea to sea.[45]

Geography and resources still combine to put constraints on Soviet maritime power, and the question of ship transfer between the four Soviet fleets remains unresolved. As Paul Nitze and Leonard Sullivan noted in 1979,

> [T]he Soviet Union has made some progress in acquiring its first overseas bases and facilities. Often, however, these arrangements have been somewhat transient, as the loss of the Soviet base in Somalia [to the US, pc] in 1977 exemplifies. In fact, the relatively secure overseas bases and facilities that the Soviets could rely on in time of war can probably be counted on one's fingers.[46]

To what degree this situation is changing is, as was noted in the Introduction, a matter of some controversy, not the least within Western and neutral nations.[47] Here is not the place to join the fray. What is important is to note the perception that parity between the superpowers presupposes, in keeping with Reynolds' scheme, US maritime superiority. If we are to believe him,

> Each so called *Pax — Romana, Brittanica* and *Americana* — has really been naval peace, where supremacy at sea provides a major deterrent against serious challenge by unfriendly opponents. In reality *pax* or peace has been a misnomer. [...] Rather, periods of international stability and political orderliness are made possible by a precarious balance of tensions between two or more great powers.[48]

And if *pax* rests on sea power, then sea power rests on a far-flung overseas — not the least island — base network. In this regard, the establishment by the US in 1971 of the Diego Garcia naval base, smack in the middle of the Indian Ocean, the new "strategic center of the world" according to US Senator Barry Goldwater,[49] can well be compared with US and UK basing on Greenland, Iceland and the Faroes, or Japanese base-hopping in the Pacific, during World War 2, or, for that matter, Rome's conquest of Malta in 218 BC during the second Punic War.[50]

As argued by Mahan and others, maritime control stands in direct proportion to basing access. But the situation has greatly changed with the development of modern long-range systems.[51] As the impact of new technologies on naval/air logistics affects the basing networks as a whole, however, this does not necessarily imply a decreasing reliance on island bases. And in fact, developments in recent years indicate that the oppsite holds true. The moot point here is the fine relationship between need and cost — not the least political — and here colonial island areas seem to hold a lead on coastal territories of mainland states of uncertain allegiance. We shall return to this problem in the following section.

A breakdown of US contra Soviet overseas facilities confirms these trends. Of 41 foreign locations listed by William Arkin and Richard Fieldhouse in 1985 as hosting elements of the US nuclear infrastructure, 18 are island states or territories. In addition, several island areas hosting such facilities, such as the Azores, Cocos Island, the Faroes, Okinawa and various Canadian islands etc., are listed under their respective metropole. In other words, over half of the territories hosting the US overseas base network are islands.[52] By contrast, of the 11 foreign locations listed for the Soviet Union, all — with the exception of Cuba — are continental, with a heavy emphasis on the European landmass. Only two island locations are listed under their respective metropole: Ethiopia's Dahlak Islands and South Yemen's Socotra, both near the convergence of the Eurasian and African continents.[53]

On the basis of the discussion above we can formulate two postulates whose validity or invalidity would have a bearing on the conclusions of a study such as outlined in this paper: One, *Pax Americana* presupposes US maritime superiority — conversely Soviet maritime inferiority (just as *Pax Sovietica*, to stick to the jargon, presupposes Soviet continental superiority).[54] Two, if this maritime superiority in turn is dependent on an overseas base network largely consisting of island bases, then island autonomism threatening such access is incompatible with US national interests. This would on the one hand explain why it is none other than the United States that has been such a prominent target in post-war expressions of island autonomism and antimilitarism, and on the other hand why the response to such manifestations has been so inflexible, as in the case of Iceland,[55] Hawaii,[56] Belau,[57] etc.

A corollary to all this is that a study of the current strategic dimension of island-continent relations will largely concentrate on matters falling within the realm of US foreign policy. It is important to note that such focus is not syno-

nymous with, nor does it presuppose, an anti-american slant. From an ethno-regional point of view, the problem posed by US military presence in Micronesia today, for example, falls under the same general heading of continental hegemony as could be applied to previous Spanish, German, British or Japanese presence there, or to current French presence in Polynesia, and so on. What is of concern is the local impact of military colonization, not the colour of the flag that flies over base headquarters.

Basing vs. Island Basing

We have discussed the geopolitical rationale for overseas bases. Aside from lending the obvious logistic advantage of mid-ocean *points d'appui* a theoretical context, however, this rationale does not immediately provide for a separation of island from coastal bases. And indeed it need not. As has already been discussed in the preceeding chapter, such a division may not necessarily be warranted from a military/metropolitan point of view. A base is a base. There are, however, a number of factors which from a military point of view place islands — if not island bases — in a special category, not the least their lack of a hinterland for what we euphemistically may term competitive interests. The US Dept. of Defense *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* defines *island bases* as follows: "Those islands, or groups of islands, belonging to individual nations and serving mainly as naval and air bases for the naval and air combat forces in the ocean areas." A careful reading of this simple description sheds ample light on the problem at hand.

Before we turn to these matters, however, some definitions are in order. For the purpose of this study we shall define *basing* as simply the establishement abroad of a military installation at a fixed site (in contrast to the wider *access*, under which all forms of military presence subsumes, including non-fixed arrangements such as aircraft overflight rights, port visit priviliges and — of particular interest with regard to Soviet overseas access — the use of off-shore anchorages within sovereign maritime limits). These sites may in turn be categorized along administrative or operational lines. As these categories have a direct bearing on the political expression of island-continent relations, they will be outlined here, even though the distinctions are often difficult to maintain in practice, and is often at variance with common or local usage.

A rigid definition of *base* would apply to a site where the user has *exclusive* extraterritorial control, either by compulsion or treaty.[58] By contrast, the term *facility* is used to indicate a site where the user's access is controlled or merely ad hoc, or where joint access and control is evidenced.[59] In practice, this distinction is short-hand for a range of possible user-host relationships. As listed by Owen Wilkes, these include: foreign sovereignty; enclaves of foreign sovereignty; foreign administrative control within host nation; joint foreign and host nation control; multilateral control; host nation operated for foreign nation; host na-

tion provision of access to foreign nation; host nation invited presence of foreign nation.[60]

One of Harkavy's themes is that in the wake of post-war decolonialization and the development from a bi-polar to a multi-polar power balance, the emphasis of overseas basing has shifted from exclusive extraterritorial control to weaker forms of access with increasing host or multilateral control. This problem of a shrinking political base for unilateral overseas presence is a problem that has been the focus of much attention in recent decades, in particular by US analysts. (We shall return to these below.) However, as this wave of decolonialization has not until quite recently hit off-shore island areas, it would be interesting to see if this trend also can be noted in the specific instance of island basing. There are several indicators to the contrary. For instance, Micronesian islands under US jurisdiction have in recent years been suggested as a "fall-back area" for Far East operations under increasing pressure from nationalist forces, such as in Japan or in the Philippines (where opposition is mounting against a renewal of the current base agreement treaty which expires 1991). While impractical, such contingency plans are confirmed by official statements as well as by projected and ongoing construction programs in Belau and the Marianas.[61] Another instance is the establishment in 1965, during the height of decolonialization, of a completely new colonial entity, the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), expressly for the purpose of facilitating the US Navy's activities in the Indian Ocean by providing a formal political framework for the Diego Garcia base. Or consider the way British overseas access has crumbled: what remains of exclusive control is a smattering of islands — Bermuda, St. Helena, Ascension — and the insular enclave of Gibraltar.

A categorization of overseas sites (hereafter for the sake of fluency referred to as bases) along operational lines is difficult, mainly because they commonly host a number of unconnected functions. A rough division is often made, however, between *forward bases*, from which the user can launch physical warfighting forces into combat, and *rear bases*, from which the user provides logistical, storage or command/control and communications/intelligence to warfighting forces.[62] Obviously, one base can provide rear support to some functions and forward support to others.[63] A fresh example is again offered by the Diego Garcia naval base, which support a number of logistic support functions for US strategic forces operating in the Indian Ocean region,[64] and which last year was reported to be serving forward functions in support of combat forces deployed in the Persian Gulf.[65]

As with all overseas bases, this distinction should with regard to island bases reasonably hinge on proximity, as in the case above; that is to say on whether they primarily serve naval forces in the area or provide en-route logistic link-up to more distant theatres. Such functions change with time, as wars redefine geographic priorities. A classic example is offered by Malta, a very forward base during the naval wars between Rome and Carthage in the third century BC and between Christian European powers and the Ottoman Empire during the 16th

Century, a British refit station during the Crimean War (ironically in support of Turkish forces), after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 a coaling station along the British umbilical route to India, again during World War 2 a beseiged forward base during the Italian and African campaigns.[66] A more recent illustration is offered by the shifting role of the Pacific islands in US strategy from direct combat support during World War 2 to extensive logistic support during the Vietnam War.[67]

But forward functions are not only served by proximity — depending on the type of operation, remoteness can be of even greater value. And remoteness is an asset that mid-ocean islands offer in abundance. During the Vietnam War, for example, the islands of the Pacific did not only host rear functions. From Anderson Air Force Base on Guam, B-52s were regularly deployed on bombing missions over Vietnam. While Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines offered a closer home base, popular Filipino sentiment prohibited that it be used for such purposes. In Guam, the US Air Force could operate "unencumbered" by local sensitivities.[68] The Strategic Air Command's B-52s still fall in the "unwanted" category overseas, and Guam is still their only home base outside the continental United States.

Guam's situation *vis-à-vis* Vietnam was to a certain extent echoed by Ascension's situation *vis-à-vis* the Falkland Islands during the 1982 war. Although as proximate to the combat area as Britain could reach to establish an operating base, the partly US leased island remained 3000 cumbersome nautical miles away.[69] A more proximate site would have meant a cheaper war. But as in the choice of Malta in the Crimean war, the political price for such a siting would have been too steep.

To a great extent this cost balance has been alleviated by new, long-range technologies in transport and communications, reducing the need for a tight-knit, and therefore large and costly, over-seas base networks. Traditional combat functions can to a great extent be conducted from home bases and politically as well as economically costly overseas bases be phased out.[70] But some sort of skeleton network must remain, and residual island possesions provide just about as much real-estate as is needed. For example, according to Harkavy,

> one recent analysis indicated that America's continued use of British-owned Ascension and Diego Garcia islands could alone, in conjunction with tanker refuelling, provide the United States the capability for extensive aerial supply to much of Africa and the Middle East.[71]

This trend also implies an increasing reliance on command, control and surveillance functions with global reach, and while satellites have taken over much of this activity, the satellites themselves require ground stations for monitoring and telemetry. While supporting functions often as controversial as those of a bomber base, these installations are less conspicuous, require less space and do not neccessarily require proximity to combat areas to serve forward functions.[72] Remote island areas serve very nicely.

This political invisibility of remote island areas also make them prime sites for much more blatantly offensive military activities. Islands have played a central role in US, Soviet, British and French nuclear testing programs for over forty years. Islands are likely candidates for schemes involving chemical and biological weapons. Island figure frequently as practice ranges for air and ship-to-shore shelling. These problems are discussed extensively elsewhere.[73] Suffice to note here that in light of what has been said with regard to the growing political costs of overseas basing, it seems unlikely that island use for these purposes will diminish in the foreseeable future.

The problems of overseas basing have been voiced with increasing urgency by US strategic analysts in recent years. Cottrell and Moorer lament,

> Political trends in the United States, budgetary constraints, changes in priorities, and the effect of technology have ... interacted with trends abroad to shrink US military deployments and thus the basing structure supporting them from the Atlantic to the Pacific. From 1953 to the present, the United States has seen its overseas naval and air bases decline in actual numbers from 150 to approximately 30.[74]

These sentiments are echoed by Nitze and Sullivan,

> The various empires of the West provided many overseas ports and facilities from which to operate [naval forces]. Now, however, interdependence and unrest are on the upswing, and we are faced with dwindling naval resources and a diminishing number of overseas bases to support them.[75]

As the colonial empires crumble, so do the vaunted overseas base networks, keystones to maritime supremacy and Mahanian order. But as they crumble on the mainland side, does not the relative importance of island bases grow, both in quantitative and qualitative terms?

As the process of decolonialization continues on the islands, with increasing demands for political disenfranchisement of areas of high strategic value, the question remains whether such disenfranchisement is in any way compatible with the strategic exigencies of continental powers. Judging by the history of island-continent relations, it's not very likely.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to identify island-continent relations as a specific problem area of conflict research. As a preliminary approach towards a more encompassive study, it has sought to establish the central role of continental military establishments in the economic, social and political development of small, isolated island communities. Within the theoretical framework for ethno-regional conflict suggested by Tägil et.al., the prevalence of island antimilitarism is sought explained as a response to the prevalence of military, as opposed to economic, colonial interests. It is suggested that this approach opens vistas

to further inquiry with reference both to empiric studies of specific island communities and to the study of theoretical issues of wider interest.

The preceeding pages have focused on island areas in continental perspective, within the contexts of maritime geopolitical theory and political and economic hegemony. But this is only half the task: a discussion of the roots and characteristics of continental hegemony is in itself insufficient to shed light on the dynamic nature of island-continent relations, herein the roots and characteristics of political mobilization such as island autonomism/antimilitarism. As Ian Lind wrote in an inspiring paper on the militarization of Hawaii:

> A traditional analysis of the militarization of Hawaii would place primary emphasis on the context provided by national and international events, explaining the dynamics of island history as simply an epiphenomenon of global forces. Such an approach has obvious intellectual merit and should not be ignored. However, such global perspectives are also inherently anti-political. Persons living, working and attempting to sustain political activity in Hawaii, or in any other specific location, will search in vain through discourses on international politics or military strategy for elements capable of informing actual political behaviour. By their very terms of analysis, such approaches overemphasize our role as victims of global forces and underestimate our potential as political actors.[76]

As it has not been the intent here to outline ethnic identification and political mobilization in militarized island communities merely as an "epiphenomenon of global forces," the foregoing discussion of the ramifications of continental perspective should reasonably be followed by of study of island perspectives, emphasizing internal dynamic factors such as ethnic homogeneity/heterogeneity, indigenous island-continent communication links, social differentiation, economic activity, religious and political affiliation, etc. What perhaps this study has provided is a basis for such a comparison: the geopolitical rationale for continental hegemony is dominant, whether it takes direct expression, in the form of military presence, or remains an indirect force in the regional political and economic order.

As a parting shot: what is not universal is the insular response. Antimilitarism is one form. Perhaps further study will point to others. In French Polynesia, where the French military presence has been masive, lasting and destructive, ethnic identification has fused with antinuclear mobilization. In the Marianas, the US military presence, although improductive, remains the main source of revenue and has provided the impetus for continued affiliation with the continental metropole. In Greenland, where the US military presence for many years remained an invisible force, the response was residual. A possible framework for a discussion of these disparities is the application of Albert Hirschmann's *Exit, Voice and Loyalty* presented by Tägil et.al.

Notes

1. Macartney, p. 12.
2. Galtung 1981, pp. 257—263.
3. Tägil, pp. 13—22.
4. See Leibowitz and Corkran for examples of this perspective.
5. Westing, p. 128—129.
6. Tägil, p. 16.
7. Arkin & Fieldhouse, appendix A p. 219. The history of the Loran-C system is unraveled in a recently published study by Owen Wilkes and Nils-Petter Gleditsch: *Loran-C and Omega. A Study of the Military Importance of Navigational Aids*, Universitetsforlaget, Oslo 1987.
8. Arkin & Fieldhouse, pp. 22—23.
9. Maria Bergom-Larsson's article in *Aftonbladet* provides a concise summary of the Belauan experience.
10. Brøsted, p. 9.
11. The definitions and interpretations of the term are legion. In this context it seems most relevant to conceive it as a product of a technological process (:industrialization) imposed from without.
12. Doumenge, p. 11.
13. From "Småstad og babel" in William Heinesen: *Fortællinger fra Thorshavn*, Gyldendal, Copenhagen 1973, p. 11 (my translation).
14. Crocombe, p. 121; *Politics in Micronesia*, p. iii. The Hawaii Geographic Society has published a map, "The *new* Paciic" that gives a clear picture of the new political order in the region.
15. See Corkran and Leibowitz for Caribbean and South Pacific regional cooperation. Macartney makes note of CRPM in his paper, p. 19.
16. For a brief discussion on maps and cognitive distortions, see Harkavy, pp. 297—300.
17. Macartney, p. 8.
18. ibid., p. 4.
19. See Galtung 1980, pp. 154—159: "International Air Communication," in particular sections 2.3 — 2.5. This article, first published in 1979 as PRIO publication S—3/79, is based on a previous study by Nils Petter Gleditsch, "Trends in World Airline Patterns," published in *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 4, no. 4 1967, pp. 366—408.
20. Davidson, pp. 341—351.
21. Macartney, p. 15.
22. Corkran, p. 1.
23. ibid.
24. Plischke, p.19.
25. ibid., appendix A: p. 134; appendix B: p. 145.
26. Leibowitz discusses the problem of associate statehood in his introductory chapter, pp. 1—13.
27. Smart, p. 62. According to press reports, China has recently occupied a number of islets in the Spratly group, including one previously held by Vietnam. *Corriere della Sera*, 8 April. 1988.
28. Braun, p. 166; *Pacific Command* p. 156.
29. KCA 30952, 31449, 32781.
30. KCA 27600,28097, 32815.
31. KCA 31513, 34064.
32. KCA 32687.
33. Allen, p. 50.
34. ibid.; Petrod.

35. *Time*, 24 Nov. 1987, pp. 22—23; *Islands Business*, June 1987, p. 29.
36. *Time*, as above, p.23.
37. Compare *Pacific Command*, pp.26—40 (1982 figures); Arkin & Fieldhouse, chapter 7, in particular pp. 128—129.
38. Harkavy discusses modern usage on pp. 271—277.
39. Nyman, p. 14.
40. ibid.
41. For a review of the "heartland" school of geopolitical theory, see Harkavy, pp. 278—283.
42. For a review of the "rimland" school of geopolitical theory, see Harkavy, pp. 283—287.
43. ibid. pp. 287—289.
44. Reynolds, p. 1.
45. Harkavy, p. 47—48.
46. Nitze & Sullivan, p. 245.
47. For a fascinating free-for-all on this matter in a Nordic context, see SNU vol. 2, chapters 3—11. The debate is summarized in my review of the report in *Information*, 3 March 1987.
48. Reynolds, p. 4.
49. Siegel, p. 2.
50. See Reynolds, p. 54.
51. Nitze & Sullivan, p. 241; Harkavy, p. 21.
52. Arkin & Fieldhouse. Collated from appendix A, pp. 214—245.
53. ibid. Collated from appendix B, pp. 264—267.
54. Compare this "rimland/heartland" scheme with the feudal analogy offered by Joan Galtung in "Big Powers and the World Feudal Structure" in Galtung 1980, pp. 352—365. A study of the present bipolarity might benefit from a historical approach to the evolution and application of geopolitical theory.
55. The Icelandic post-war anti-base movement as an expression of nationalist versus socialist loyalties was discussed by visiting Prof. Thor Whitehead in a seminar on "The Formation of Iceland's Foreign Policy" given at the Dept. of History, Lund University on 5 May 1987.
56. See Lind for a recent analysis of continental vs. insular interests in the military presence.
57. See Bergom-Larsson.
58. Harkavy, p. 15.
59. ibid. For a discussion of the political significance of the distinction between base and facility, see Nitze & Sullivan, p. 245.
60. Cited in *Pacific Command*, p. 5.
61. See Magg, pp. 58—59; *Pacific Command*, pp. 135—137, Harkavy, pp. 209—211.
62. *Pacific Command*, p.5. The distinction here is made with specific reference to US forces in the Pacific, but has general application.
63. ibid.
64. For an early in-depth exposé on Diego Garcia, see Siegel. For a slightly more recent break-down of base functions, see *Pacific Command*, pp.152—153.
65. AW&ST, 3 Aug. 1987, p. 28: "Navy Deploys Helicopters to Counter Gulf Mine Threat."
66. Blouet, chapters 5, 8 and 9.
67. For a first-hand account, see Hooper, chapter XVI: "Western Pacific Bases."
68. *Pacific Command*, p. 121; source of quote unknown (missing notes in extant copy).
69. KCA 31525—31537
70. Harkavy, p.21.
71. ibid.
72. ibid., p. 33.
73. For a general discussion and further reference see Westing, pp. 135—137.

74. Cottrell & Moorer, p. 8.
75. Nitze & Sullivan, p. 9.
76. Lind, p. 26.

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