

Kobayashi Maru, the 1973 Naval Standoff, and the Soviet “Battle of the First Salvo” Concept

An Essay for players of *Command: Modern Operations*

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Many science fiction fans will be quite familiar with the training scenario, “Kobayashi Maru” featured in the 1982 film *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. This is a scenario that was deliberately built to be unwinnable for the main participant: a ship command candidate in the Federation Starfleet, with the intent not being to win, but rather analyze how the candidate handles such an impossible situation, with the candidate not being aware it is such a test until after it is completed. Even when one candidate, Captain James T. Kirk, was able to “win”, he later confesses that he cheated by reprogramming the scenario to be winnable, believing that there is no such thing as a “No-win” scenario.

For many officers and sailors of the Soviet Navy during the First Cold War, however, “no-win” scenarios were very real, especially when their opponent was the United States Navy. During Cold War I, the Soviet Navy always understood how much of a threat the US (and to a lesser extent allied NATO) navies potentially threatened not only their military forces in the event of war, but also their national homeland, especially if the war were to rapidly become a nuclear conflict. Potential nuclear attacks from American or British Aircraft carriers, and later cruise missile armed surface ships, threatened nuclear attack on the Soviet flanks and interior from less-than-obvious directions as well as shorter warning times than strategic bombers launched from North America or the UK.

In response to this threat, the Soviet fleet, under the leadership of Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, developed the concept/doctrine commonly referred to as the “Battle of the First Salvo”. This concept called for any at-sea Soviet naval assets to launch rapid and devastating attacks on the nearest enemy vessels, especially aircraft carriers, with the understanding that the attacking forces will not have great chances of surviving the opening days, hours, or even minutes of the war. In the event that Cold War I had turned hot, either out of the blue or as result of a crisis, many men of the Soviet Navy would have found themselves in their very own, and real, “Kobayashi Maru” scenario.

This essay seeks to explain the “Battle of the First Salvo” concept and its effects both in Soviet ship design as well as actual deployments, with a highlight on a real and lesser-known Cold War I event in 1973, as well as a scenario from *Command: Red Tide* that took its name from the famous Star Trek scenario.

Understanding this concept and how it is implemented, both in *Command* as well as real life, can help to understand the nature of Soviet/Russian ship design and capabilities, as well as how they may have fought in the war that did not happen, and let us hope, will not happen in the future.

NOTE: Throughout this essay, I will use the NATO Reporting names for Soviet vessels and weapons for simplicity, and the fact that *Command* players are more likely to be familiar with them.

Preparing for the “First Salvo”

How did the Soviet Navy actually intend to strike US/NATO warships first and immediately at the start of a war, especially since that war could start with almost no notice? There’s several layers and answers to this question.

The Threat:

US Navy aircraft carriers following the Second World War, and through the present day, embarked on regular deployments around the world, but often in areas that allowed them instant or relatively quick ability to strike Soviet and Warsaw Pact military and industrial targets, had hostilities commenced with short notice. In the event of a major crisis that allowed time for mobilization and buildup, these carriers would undoubtedly receive reinforcements, increasing the potential threat.

While they took place in a number of locations, the most prominent of these deployments was in the Mediterranean Sea, especially the eastern areas in between Egypt, Greece and Turkey. From this area, nuclear weapon armed bombers could strike the Soviet regions of the Caucasus, Crimea, Southern Russia and Ukraine, as well as Warsaw Pact members Bulgaria and Romania. While naturally local air defenses would do their utmost to thwart any such attacks, it was reasonably believed that the most effective defense would be to neutralize the carriers before their planes could even launch.

This did not necessarily require an aircraft carrier to be sunk outright, which could be a real challenge given their massive size. Simply causing enough damage to prevent flight operations for the foreseeable future would have been enough, especially with the more complicated carrier technology from the 50s onward.

From the 1980s onward, a new threat arose that greatly complicated the “First Salvo” concept: the Tomahawk Cruise Missile. While also capable of carrying a conventional explosive warhead, Nuclear-tipped Tomahawks were carried aboard US Navy destroyers, cruisers, and hunter-killer submarines, as well as some Royal Navy submarines. This greatly increased the number of potential nuclear weapon launch platforms that could potentially fire on the USSR with very short notice. While ship-based Nuclear Tomahawks were retired in the 1990s as part of an arms control measure, with the Second Cold War ongoing, the potential of ship and submarine-based nuclear Tomahawks could return.

US, French and British nuclear ballistic missile submarines likewise presented a serious nuclear threat to the USSR, however the responsibility for neutralizing them was largely the domain of the USSR’s own submarine force, due to the highly stealthy nature of SSBNs. While they would have likely been primary targets in the event of hostilities, the effort against SSBNs is somewhat outside the “First Salvo” concept because unlike with the former, the targets could much more likely be located and fixed prior to the commencement of hostilities, and posed a decreased chance of nuclear escalation than attacking SSBNs.

Peacetime Tracking and Targeting, and Wartime attacks:

This is the crux of the “First Salvo” concept. In order to strike as rapidly as possible when the war starts, it is critical to find and fix the intended targets *before* fighting starts. The Soviet Navy had several different ways of doing this.

AGIs- Possibly the most common platform for peacetime tracking and targeting were Soviet AGIs, (Auxiliary Intelligence Vessels). These were typically converted trawlers or special purpose built long endurance vessels that had the primary role of gathering intelligence on Western military assets, chiefly naval forces. They would do this visually or with onboard sensors such as surface radars. They are a very common sight in *Command* scenarios set between the 1950s and 1991.

These vessels were often engaged in sometimes dangerous cat-and-mouse games with US and NATO surface vessels, trying to force the vessels in question to maneuver to avoid collision so as to disrupt their operations, but also kept their respectful distance sometimes. Sometimes the surface vessels being watched would try to drive the AGIs away themselves to make a point, or to conceal sensitive operations.

In the event of war, it was likely that AGIs would report the position of enemy surface warships as rapidly as they could to their superiors. They would continue to report position updates as long as they could, but it was very unlikely they would survive very long. By their nature, they were conspicuous, and the sailors aboard these vessels would likely be among the first Soviet personnel to perish had Cold War I gone hot.

Surface Warships- A common duty of Soviet surface warships, when on deployment, were to perform a similar role as AGIs, although it was more dangerous due to them being heavily armed. It would have been a common sight for sailors on both sides of Cold War I to see one or more of the other side’s naval ships steaming nearby. These, along with AGIs, were sometimes referred to as “Tattle tails”. While largely a role of observation and showing the flag, sometimes dangerous games of endurance would occur, with one side or the other maneuvering aggressively and threatening collisions. The 1972 Incidents-At-Sea Agreement was intended to try and control the very dangerous situation at sea, with mixed but ultimately successful results.

Soviet surface vessels had a range of capabilities which evolved as Cold War I progressed. The advent of the Anti-Ship Cruise Missile, however, greatly increased the importance of the “First Salvo” concept, with even a single vessel able to cause considerable damage in short order if they were able to launch before the enemy was ready.

As a result, some Soviet vessels were designed with the “First Salvo” in mind, such as the Kynda, Kresta I and Slava class cruisers, as well as the Kanin and Sovremenny Class destroyers. These vessels typically emphasized an Anti-Ship armament, whereas other vessels might have a focus on anti-air or anti-submarine warfare. Most surface combatants could perform a tattle tail role and at least try to cause some damage in a “First Salvo” situation, however.

By the mid 1970s, when the Soviets started deploying SSBNs capable of striking North America from home waters, the Soviet fleet started a strong emphasis toward Anti-Submarine Warfare as part of the “bastion” concept, where SSBNs would gather in defensible areas close to home, being protected by

other parts of the navy. This started to limit the Soviet ability to conduct "First Salvo" operations, due to a reduced emphasis on long range deployments, but such a scenario was prepared for through the end of Cold War I.

Aircraft and satellites- Long range aircraft and specialized satellites would have been crucial to locating and fixing Western warships during peacetime and wartime, especially with the latter being possibly invulnerable to attack up until the mid 1980s.

Typical aircraft used by the Soviets for this purpose would have been three variants of the Tu-95 Bear bomber: The Tu-95 "Bear-D", a radar search variant, "Bear-E" a photo-recon variant, and the Tu-142 "Bear-F", an ASW/Maritime Patrol aircraft. Additionally, other maritime patrol aircraft such as the IL-38 "May" and Be-12 "Mail" could also perform this role.

During Cold War I, Satellites could not, alone, give precise enough targeting for long range attacks, but they were able to assist the Soviets in directing their scouts to the right areas for a clearer location of the enemy vessels. Typically, this role would be performed by EORSATs (electro-optical satellites) and RORSATs (Radar Ocean Reconnaissance Satellites)

Soviet Naval Aviation also had their own dedicated combat aircraft that were trained for anti-ship strikes. If they were sufficiently alerted, and within range, they would likely have participated in "First Salvo" attacks. Such aircraft included Maritime Strike variants of the Tu-16 Badger and Tu-22M Backfire, attacking with long range missiles of their own. If available, other smaller strike aircraft may have participated as well if they were ready.

Submarines- As with US and NATO navies, Soviet submarines regularly trailed and observed Western naval forces for intelligence purposes. In the event of hostilities, submarines may have had different initial orders depending on their type and position.

The chief submarine type for "First Salvo" attacks would have been Guided Missile Submarines (SSG/SSGN), such as the Juliett, Echo, Charlie and Oscar classes. While armed with torpedoes, their primary weapons were anti-ship cruise missiles, and their primary targets were envisioned to be US aircraft carriers. If such a submarine were at or very close to striking range to Western naval forces at the outset of hostilities, they would likely participate in "First Salvo" attacks. If not, they may be directed to other tasks or kept in reserve for future operations. Due to the limited range of radars onboard submarines, they would likely need to have their targeting information provided from another platform.

Torpedo armed submarines may or may not participate in "First Salvo" attacks. They would need to get very close to attack effectively, especially a submarine detected and located by enemy ships prior to hostilities would likely find itself under attack very quickly. They may be used more effectively for follow-up attacks on already damaged ships.

Ideally, a "Battle of the First Salvo" would encompass a mixture of surface, air and submarine based attacks from multiple directions, as will be seen in a subsequent section. But it was completely possible that communications issues or the sudden outbreak of war could preclude any coordinated attacks being made. This meant that for any isolated Soviet vessels within range, they may strike on

their own with what they have, with the understanding that they were likely to be destroyed. To hesitate would likely lead to one's own destruction without inflicting any damage on the enemy.

The 1973 Naval Standoff: "First Salvo" (almost) in action

Fortunately for the world, the First Cold War never did escalate to a direct shooting war between the superpowers. Ultimately, both sides generally had little desire to actually cross that line and fight a third world war, especially with the strong likelihood of nuclear war devastating their nations and the planet as a whole. They were generally content with posturing and engaging in proxy wars in the "third world".

However, there were several occasions when the United States and the Soviet Union came quite close to open hostilities, either due to intentional brinkmanship, or as a result of fear and miscalculation. The most famous example of the former would undoubtedly be the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, which was arguably a major turning point in Cold War One, where both sides had truly faced the edge of the abyss. A major example of the latter case would be the 1983 'War Scare' period where a combination of increasingly militant rhetoric and actions by the Reagan administration combined with an aging and increasingly paranoid Soviet leadership led to a situation where some elements of Soviet leadership started to sincerely fear that a surprise US nuclear attack was imminent.

Somewhere in between the open brinkmanship cases and the pure miscalculation cases is a not widely known Cold War One event that was nonetheless quite dangerous and carried a real danger of at least a limited conflict breaking out: The Naval Standoff of October 1973.

Background: The Yom Kippur War (Oct 6-25, 1973)

Egypt and Syria launched a coordinated attack on Israel on October 6th 1973, with the intent to ultimately retake their lost territories from the 1967 Six Day War. Egypt sought to regain the Sinai Peninsula, and Syria sought to regain the Golan Heights, and possibly strike into northern Israel.

While the combined Egyptian and Syrian forces failed to achieve complete surprise, the first days of the war were very bad for the Israelis. Considerable numbers of tanks and aircraft were lost due to Soviet supplied anti-air and anti-tank weapons. The Israelis underestimated their Arab opponents, who had shown to be quite incompetent in 1967. The situation against the Syrians in the Golan Heights in those first days was so critical, that some Israeli military leaders reportedly made their "secret" nuclear arsenal ready for use to stop Syrian forces from crossing the Jordan River and driving into Israel proper.

Israel's strongest ally was the United States, and a primary reason for Israel not striking first in 1973 was a belief that they could not be seen as the aggressor, so as to be more likely to get American support. The Nixon Administration agreed to resupply critical military equipment that the Israelis had lost in combat, including tanks and aircraft. In response, the Soviet Union started its own support effort for its allies in Egypt and Syria.

In part due to American support, the Israelis were able to turn the tide. Damascus was threatened by an Israeli Counteroffensive, and the Israeli army was able to launch a counter-crossing of the Suez Canal to encircle an entire Egyptian army on the eastern bank. With US and Soviet involvement in

negotiations, a ceasefire was agreed to and implemented by October 25th, 19 days after the outbreak of the war, with what was ultimately an Israeli victory.

However, as fighting raged in the Sinai and on the Golan, a dangerous situation was developing off the coast, in the Mediterranean Sea.

Sixth Fleet and Fifth Eskadra position for the worst:

The US and Soviet navies regularly deployed naval forces in the Mediterranean throughout Cold War One. When the Yom Kippur War broke out, both fleets went on alert. In short, the US Sixth Fleet sent its carrier forces toward the Eastern Mediterranean so as to show the flag and prepare for possible intervention in the event the tide turned against Israel. Once the US resupply airlift to Israel started, the Sixth Fleet also had the task of supporting the airlift. The Soviet Fifth Eskadra was reinforced and deployed near US naval formations. While this was partially showing the flag and muscle, it was also deployed in line with the “First Salvo” concept.

Neither the US or the Soviet Union desired fighting a war over this latest Arab-Israeli conflict, but both felt that they had to support their allies, or lose face on the world stage. From the Soviet perspective, if the US intervened on behalf of Israel, they would be compelled to join in to defend their Arab allies. If that were to happen, it was believed that there would be a high risk of the US starting a wider war against the USSR. The Sixth Fleet’s carriers were in a position where they could strike the USSR with nuclear weapons if given the order. This demanded deployment of the Fifth Eskadra’s ships to be prepared to attack the carriers in short order if war became inevitable.

For most of the period that the war raged in the Sinai and Golan, as well as some time after the ceasefire, US and Soviet ships maneuvered near each-other constantly and sometimes aggressively. Some reports claim that Soviet vessels on some occasions, trained their weapons and/or fire-control radars on US ships and aircraft. Commander of the Sixth Fleet at the time, Admiral Daniel Murphy, estimated that the chances of a clash breaking out at about 40%.

Tensions reached their height on October 25th, the day of the final ceasefire. Israel had previously accepted a ceasefire on October 23rd, but unilaterally broke the ceasefire to improve their military position on the western bank of the Suez Canal. This action prompted the Soviets to propose a joint US-Soviet peacekeeping force to be sent to the region, and threatened that if the US turned down such a proposal, the Soviets might be compelled to intervene unilaterally. In response to this, the US government issued a global alert order to all US forces, raising their posture to Defense Condition (DEFCON) 3, a level not seen since the Cuban Missile Crisis. There was a real concern that the Soviets could dispatch paratroopers to Egypt and/or Syria to help their allies fight the Israelis, which would compel a similar US response, since the Sixth Fleet had about 2,000 Marines available to deploy in short order.

Ultimately the Israelis helped settle the crisis by finally accepting the ceasefire for good. It was also settled by both Washington and Moscow not having a real desire to escalate the situation, especially with US president Richard Nixon under political siege due to the Watergate Scandal.

The confrontation between US and Soviet warships in October 1973 presented a serious danger of a potentially deadly incident, which carried a strong likelihood of Soviet leadership enacting the “First Salvo” concept, so as to not take any chances if the US decided to strike.

The very real danger is exemplified by a little known incident that occurred shortly after the Yom Kippur War broke out. On Oct. 7th, the British Royal Navy aircraft carrier HMS *Hermes* was participating in a NATO exercise in the Norwegian Sea. Her carrier group was being shadowed by a Soviet warship, in this case a Kanin class destroyer. At one point, a fire broke out onboard the ship near its torpedo launchers. This resulted in an explosion that inadvertently launched a torpedo. Fortunately the captain of the Soviet ship had turned his vessel away from *Hermes* by the time of the launch, as it was likely in a position where the torpedo could have hit the carrier.

Such a launch was completely plausible as the opening shot of a “First Salvo” strike, and it is completely plausible that a major crisis could have developed had *Hermes* been hit and damaged. It is possible that the Destroyer could have been fired upon and engaged in a suicidal battle with the Royal Navy that day.....

Now let us turn to a *Command* scenario that demonstrates how a “First Salvo” attack could actually work.

Red Tide Scenario #2, Kobayashi Maru: A “First Salvo” Showcase

The *Command* DLC “Red Tide” features a Cold War Gone Hot in the spring of 1985. The background circumstances of this war are quite vague, perhaps deliberately. Given that hostilities commence on April 1, 1985, perhaps we can infer that a more hard-line leader than Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the USSR in March 1985 following the death of Konstantin Chernenko. The first scenario in the campaign “The Bedford Incident” depicts the presumed flash-point for war, an ASW engagement in the Arctic, but given that scenario #2 occurs concurrently with that scenario, there does seem to be at least some degree of premeditation on the part of the Soviets, thus explaining the orders provided to the player in that scenario.

The setup:

Scenario #2, “Kobayashi Maru” places the player effectively in the role of the Commander of the Soviet Fifth Eskadra, the official name of their Mediterranean fleet. At the time of scenario start, the United States Navy is conducting joint ASW exercises with the Italian navy in the area to the east of Malta. There has been a series of tense encounters between US ships and the nearby Soviet Kashin class destroyer *Nadezhnyy*, serving as a tattle tail. In light of the events of The Bedford Incident up north, things are about to get explosive.

The US task force includes the Nimitz class carrier USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower*, as well as a considerable number of escorts, though not any of the then-new Ticonderoga class missile cruisers and their very advanced Aegis radar system. The Italian force includes the light carrier *Giuseppe Garibaldi* with a few escorts, as well as land based fighter and ASW aircraft support from an airbase in southern Italy. Since the US and Italians are conducting ASW exercises, there are also US and Italian submarines in the area. Additionally, NATO forces have considerable land based radar coverage throughout Italy, Turkey and Greece.

The player's forces consist of a respectable mix of assets that are well positioned for the "First Salvo":

Forces at or approaching **Patrol Area One**, covering the Italian carrier force, consists of:

A surface group consisting of 5 surface combatants:

- Kresta II Class Cruiser *Admiral Makarov*, an ASW cruiser with minimal surface strike abilities.
- Sovermenny Class Destroyer *Otiichnyy*, a destroyer with 8x powerful "Sunburn" anti-ship missiles.
- Udaloy Class destroyer *Marshal Vasilevskiy*, an ASW Destroyer with minimal surface strike abilities -
- Mod Kashin Class destroyer *Smyshienny*, a destroyer with 4x Styx anti-ship missiles
- Krivak II Frigate *Rezvyi*, an ASW frigate with minimal surface strike capabilities.

-Foxtrot class submarine B-213, armed with torpedoes

-Alfa class nuclear submarine K-493, armed with torpedoes and ASW rockets

-Victor I class nuclear submarine K-53, armed with torpedoes

-Mayak Class AGI *Ladoga*, positioned to track the Italian carrier force.

Forces at or approaching **Patrol Area Two**, covering the US carrier force, consists of:

-Mod Kashin class Destroyer *Nadezhnyy*, armed with Styx anti-ship missiles, among others (discussed below)

-Foxtrot class submarine B-40, armed with torpedoes

-Charlie II class guided missile submarine K-209, armed with Torpedoes and Anti-ship missiles

-Okean class AGI *Alidada*, positioned to track the US Carrier force.

Additional Soviet forces include:

2x Juliett class Guided Missile submarines, K-67 west of Malta, and K-318 to the north of the Libyan region of Cyrenaica. Each is armed with long range Shaddock anti-ship missiles, and are already within range of *USS Eisenhower*.

12x Tu-22M Backfire bombers based on an airbase in Crimea. To minimize possible detection, they cannot overfly NATO territory, instead needing to divert over Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Albania to get in position to launch their supersonic Anti-Ship missiles

12x Su-17 Fitter strike aircraft at Tripoli airport in Libya armed with Anti-radiation missiles

3x Tu-16 Badger recon aircraft, one already in the air, also at Tripoli airport.

Finally, the Soviets have the assistance of available forces from their ally Libya, though they are not under the player's control:

2x Nanuchka class Missile patrol boats

1x Foxtrot class submarine

Various radar and air defense sites in Libyan territory

From Peace to War:

As said in the beginning of this section, this scenario occurs concurrently with Scenario #1, "The Bedford Incident". While this event up north is presented as the catalyst for the war that breaks out, the speed of events suggest some degree of premeditation of hostile action. The scenario briefing mentions a series of non-shooting incidents between Soviet and NATO vessels in the Black Sea the previous month, and claims that NATO navies have been conducting more aggressive operations. So we can assume that there is an unusually high degree of tension between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in the days and weeks prior to the start of the campaign. Therefore, this is not a "bolt from the blue" war.

The orders given to the Soviet player in this scenario call for the Fifth Eskadra to position itself to strike the nearby NATO forces upon receipt of orders to do so. This is probably not unlike the orders that were historically given to the Fifth Eskadra in October 1973 as the Yom Kippur War raged, albeit with a somewhat less tense situation ongoing than what is happening in the *Red Tide* story. The amount of Soviet naval forces present in the Mediterranean is not unusually high, but the concentration of them in this central area does suggest that the Soviet leadership believes war is very likely.

The scenario begins at 0800 hours Zulu Time (GMT), and the player is simply to move their ships and vessels in such a way to close the distance and maintain the most number of vessels within firing range of NATO ships as possible.

Starting at about 0900 hours, the player will start receiving messages ordering first the Backfire and Fitter squadrons, and then eventually the surface group, to engage NATO forces at 1200Z. It is possible for hostilities to commence before that time, but this means that at least in the Mediterranean theatre, it is the Soviets who intend to commence hostilities. This also means that the player is technically free to open fire at their discretion if they judge NATO combat operations to be imminent, though such leeway on the part of the local commander would not likely have been officially given, perhaps due to wanting to keep the door open for a last minute deescalation.

The "First Salvo" doctrine is perhaps best represented in this scenario by the message giving orders as to the course of action for the destroyer *Nadezhnyy*, the tattle tail that is intermixed with the *Eisenhower* carrier group:

FM SEVASTOPOL HQ
TO NADEZHNY
011100ZAPR85

1. AT 1200Z NADEZHNY TO ENGAGE USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER AT MINIMUM STYX RANGE AND TO CONTINUE WITH GUNFIRE AND SA-N-1 IN SASS MODE
 2. TO CONTINUE TO ENGAGE UNTIL USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER IS SUNK.
- BT

Given the position of the *Nadezhny*, intermixed with several US warships, this is a suicide mission. The lone destroyer must inflict as much damage as it can in the shortest time possible, as it will almost assuredly be destroyed in rather short order upon the commencement of hostilities.

The destroyer does have 4x rear-firing Styx anti-ship missiles, meaning that the vessel must be facing away from the Eisenhower to engage with them. The variant of Styx missile onboard this destroyer also has a minimum firing range of 4 nautical miles (nm), so it is advisable for the player to actively micromanage the position of this vessel in relation to the USS *Eisenhower*.

Additionally, the destroyer's Doctrine settings have the option of "Use SAMs in Anti-Surface Mode" set to "NO", so this should be changed to "YES" right away. As the "First Salvo" concept suggests, and present situation confirms, *Nadezhny* is almost assured to be destroyed not long after the outbreak of hostilities, so there is not much reason to use its surface-to-air missiles for defense, and rather unleash everything it can to cause as much damage to the USS *Eisenhower* as possible. This is completely feasible, due to the fact that the *Nadezhny* is already at the equivalent of point blank range to engage before fighting breaks out.

Most other forces at the Player's command, especially the Backfires and Fitters, already have pre-set missions that they can use to carry out their combat orders upon hostilities commencing. Still, it would be prudent to manually order every missile carrying platform within range of the *Eisenhower* to fire their full salvos of missiles at the carrier immediately after fighting starts.

Given the positions of Soviet assets, there is a good chance that at least a few missiles will get through to hit the *Eisenhower*. One or two solid hits may be enough to knock out the effective capability of the carrier, though it is advisable for scenario scoring reasons to seek to actually sink the carrier. Missiles from the Backfires and/or torpedoes from submarines may be required to accomplish this.

As the "First Salvo" concept believes, your forces are likely to take serious casualties in this battle, but striking a major blow against NATO forces right at the start of the war is believed to be worth the cost.

"First Salvo" in Cold War II?:

With the ongoing situation of the Second Cold War, it is not completely clear if the Russian Federation has retained a form of the "First Salvo" doctrine, especially since the Russian navy is a shadow of what it was at the peak of its Cold War One strength. They do not have nearly the numbers of vessels to regularly deploy at various locations that they had during the Soviet era. Shadowing operations by Russian AGIs as well as warships on both sides have returned and continue through the present day,

with similar actions also being conducted by the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy in the Western Pacific, and particularly in the South China Sea.

Incidents still occur, such as the 2021 Black Sea incident, in which the destroyer HMS *Defender* and frigate HNLMS *Evertsen* were harassed near the Russian-occupied Crimea after they had departed the Ukrainian port of Odessa, with Russian aircraft conducting mock attacks on the vessels, as well as reportedly dropping live ordinance in the vicinity of HMS *Defender*, as a sort of "warning shot". Russian patrol boats also participated in the harassment.

Following the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022, which massively intensified Cold War II, some naval deployments suggest that the "First Salvo" concept may still be alive in some form in today's Russian Navy. While NATO deployed considerable naval forces in the Eastern Mediterranean, including the carriers USS *Harry S. Truman*, French carrier *Charles De Gaulle*, and Italian carrier *Cavour*, the Russian Navy concentrated considerable firepower in the same region, including two of the three Slava Class missile cruisers, *Varyag* and *Marshal Ustinov* (the third Slava, *Moskva*, was in the Black Sea participating in the Ukraine War, where it would be sunk by Ukrainian missiles on April 14). Both of these considerable forces, NATO and Russian, remained in the region for a few months, and while not much detail is presently available, the deployments do seem quite reminiscent of those that were seen in the First Cold War, especially since the Slava Class were built for devastating anti-surface strikes. Given the uncertainty of the situation early in the Ukraine war, it is quite likely that both NATO and Russian Naval commanders actively prepared for one side or the other to open fire with little warning.

Newer technologies, however, may change the nature of "First Salvo" to make it viable to a weakened Russian Navy, as well as an increasingly strong People's Liberation Army Navy, which does not yet have the same level of global deployment that the Soviets once had. The advent in recent years of both Anti-Ship Ballistic Missiles and Hypersonic Cruise Missiles may allow for a newer version of "First Salvo" that might no longer require a self-sacrifice element. Both of these weapon classes feature both very high speed and very long ranges. This means that the launching platforms could be far from enemy vessels and even concealed from clear observation at the time of launch.

These weapons would still need to obtain accurate firing solutions, however. Satellite technology has advanced quite far since the latter stages of Cold War One, and while military satellites may be some of the first targets to be fired upon if Cold War II goes hot, they will probably be able to transmit accurate final firing coordinates for any ready launchers before they are destroyed. Aircraft, ships, and submarines will likely be important also in obtaining the pre-hostilities firing solutions. Future "First Salvo" attacks may also be led by Cyber-attacks in an attempt to limit or neutralize the enemy's ability to react to the incoming salvos.

The "Battle of the First Salvo" concept is a very important one to understand Soviet Naval Deployments and development during most of the First Cold War, and might have returned to prominence now that we face the uncertain future of the Second Cold War.