

IUSS/SOSUS DINNER SPEECH, 50TH ANNIVERSARY
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Politics in Promotion (or how I became COSL)

Ancient history. It's 1953 and I am providing submarine services off Bermuda. My first meeting with LT Joe Kelly, later dubbed "father of SOSUS." I was a LCDR.

Fast forward to 1960. COMSUBLANT operations staff moved from New London to Norfolk. I was Operations Officer and I set up shop in the OpCon Center. It was my job to route our submarines in the Atlantic. Regularly I walked across the street for the morning SOSUS brief. I played the role of enemy, working to avoid detection. It was good competition as the System worked hard to justify its existence

In 1961 I was promoted to CAPT and sent to "exile" in the Pentagon. Three years later I went to a deep draft command out of Norfolk. We were deployed to Europe when the Major Command list came out. I was not on it, my first non-selection, no doubt due to a disagreement with my Pentagon boss at that time. My Naval Academy classmate and good friend Roy Robison was COSL.

When we returned up Norfolk, I made a trip to WashDC to look for an assignment - or maybe put in to retire. In BuPers I met with the CAPT detail officer. Thinking "Oceanographer of the Navy" I asked "How about something to do with oceanography in the Washington area? He looked thru his files and said, "I have this Oceanographic System, but it's in Norfolk." With no hesitation I said: "I will take it!" He did not have a clue about what it was, a well kept secret. The System had no Clout.

My orders came to the ship while we were in the Caribbean for an exercise. On reporting in Norfolk, I learned VADM Weakley, COMASWFORLANT, was put out with my assignment because BuPers had failed to check with him. Fortunately his Chief of Staff was a War College classmate, and he vouched for me. It was an exciting time. The Soviets had just started sending nuclear submarines into the Atlantic. We moved into plush quarters in the OpCon center and acquired our first computer, a monstrous thing. My excellent Chief Staff Officer, John Davis, got me pointed in the right

direction. One of us visited each NAVFAC quarterly. Each visit an adventure. I found two troublesome projects to work on. NAVFAC C.O.s were LCDRs and it was a dead end for promotion. Our T-buildings were manned by STs Sonar Technicians. Their promotion exams did not cover the secret things they were doing, so they had to waste a lot of time studying shipboard SONAR. It was a long fight but we got that one resolved with the OT rate.

About 1966 the Navy created a so called ASW Czar, VADM Martell. We were producing results. Now the System had clout, lots of it. We took up the promotion problem, and ADM Martell arranged for me to give the CDR selection board a classified brief. The Board had never seen the classified addendums to the LCDR fitness reports. All of the NAVFAC COs were selected for CDR that year. We acquired dedicated phone lines to all NAVFACs. I recall our phone bill was a million 1966 dollars a month. We could repeat any display from a NAVFAC at HQ in the OpCon Center. One day it happened that a visit by the SecNav coincided with a November class Nuke snooping around Bermuda. With the time it took the sound to reach the hydrophones, he could see what the submarine was doing and where it was. The SecNav was impressed. We had Clout.

CAPT Joe Kelly and his cable ships laid hydrophone arrays north of Iceland, unbeknownst to the Soviets; and NAVFAC Keflavik was established. I considered Ernie Castillo was uniquely qualified to take charge, but he did not have adequate seniority. Nevertheless, he was assigned to command and lived up to highest expectations. We had Clout. RADM Ralph Weymouth was SOPA in Iceland. He said no way was this LT going to get senior officer quarters handy to the T-building. The words he used were: "Over my dead body" We got the quarters. We had Clout

In my situation, I floated recommendations up the chain of command that my tour be extended for a 3rd year and that OSL be designated a major command. I got the 3rd year and would love to have stayed longer. The major command idea was tabled.. Toward the end of that 3rd year, BuPers put me on the major command list after my year group was no longer being considered. I completed my 30 years in style with command of a guided missile cruiser. We had Clout. Note: I understand OSL later was designated a Major Command so I scored double in that regard.