DOING NAVAL HISTORY
Essays Toward Improvement

Edited by

John B. Hattendorf

Ernest J. King Professor of Maritime History
Naval War College

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Naval War College
Historical Monograph Series
No. 13

The Historical Monograph series are book-length studies of the history of naval warfare, edited historical documents, conference proceedings, and bibliographies. They are the products of the Naval War College's historical studies and are based, wholly or in part, on source materials in the College's Naval Historical Collection. Financial support for research projects, conference support and printing is provided by the Naval War College Foundation.

Other volumes in the series are:

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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE PRESS
Newport, Rhode Island

1995

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collections of the Naval War College Museum,
Newport, Rhode Island, and
taken from J.O. Davidson's "The President's
Vacation—Manoeuvres of the North Atlantic Squadron,"
Harper's Weekly, vol. XXVIII, no. 1446 (6 September 1884),
pp. 582–83, illustrating a report that President Chester A. Arthur
visited the Naval Torpedo Station and observed fleet exercises at
Newport, Rhode Island, on 28 August 1884.

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Acknowledgments

Introduction

John B. Hattendorf

There is an old sailor's grave that lies not far from Portsmouth, New Hampshire. On the moss-covered, native blue slate, one can still clearly read the epitaph, engraved in 1818:[1]

> Lies here the hull of an old Ship, strip't
> of her tackel and ornament food for worms, but
> the work itself will not be lost, it will appear once
> more as he believes, in a new & more beautiful
> model corrected & amended by the Author.

This inscribed stone seems to be an appropriate symbol of what this volume is about. In 1993, at the first Yale—Naval War College conference, the participants discussed the current state of maritime and naval history. While there were exceptions to the rule, many agreed that much of the work that was being published in the field was both relatively unsophisticated and outdated in its approach, particularly when contrasted to the best work on other themes in current historical research.[2] A follow-on seminar was held at New Haven not to lament that fact, but to do something positive about it. While the old naval history may well be food for worms, the substance of naval history should not be lost because of it. Naval history needs to reappear in a new, corrected and amended model, linking it to general history while also improving methods for the specialized study of the subject.

There are many dangers in making such a proposal. Perhaps, the first is the problem presented by the very issue of discussing methodology. Joseph Strayer once cautioned that "the more history we write the more we worry about the value and nature of history." He pointed out that "The increase in the number of books on historiography and historical methodology is proportionally far greater than the increase in the number of historians."[3] There is always a danger

[1] "Francis Winkley, boat builder & mariner, deceased October 9th 1818, aged 85." The stone is located in a small family cemetery on a farm at Berry Hill, Barrington, New Hampshire.

[2] The proceedings of this conference are included in John B. Hattendorf, ed., *Ubi Sumus?: The State of Naval and Maritime History* (Newport: Naval War College Press, 1994).

[3] Joseph R. Strayer, "Introduction," to Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1954), p. vii.

in concentrating too much on form and not substance, on theory and not practice. Yet, I believe that the practice of naval history needs to examine better methods and to improve itself. It needs a breath of fresh air. Sailors will understand that for naval history, this could well be the "cat's paw" on the water that signals a shift in the wind.

Too often, when the current generation of naval historians get together, they lament their situation, complaining that they are unappreciated, unloved, unread. For many of us, it is very true, but we need to stand up and suggest how the sub-specialty of naval history can improve itself. Before this conference took place in New Haven, no group of historians had ever tried systematically to suggest broad standards for this sub-specialty, listing the critical ideas, issues and themes for naval historians to examine.

Specialists in any field often have difficulty in seeing beyond the boundaries of their own topic. In attempting to break out of limiting habits, it is helpful, indeed essential, to bring in scholars from other disciplines who have related interests. For the New Haven conference, we asked several political scientists to join a select band of historians. There undoubtedly will be those who see this as some kind of antinomian heresy, disregarding all accepted standards. On the other hand, there will be those who will say that it is not enough; we should have asked students of art and literature, sociology and anthropology and a host of others. There is much substance to the latter criticism, but it is more than one can sustain in a single conference or in a single volume. It is something that can follow on from this volume.

Rather than to range widely and superficially across all sorts of topics, it is better to begin by looking in depth at the essential nature of navies. In this, all will agree that navies are instruments of government and operate as highly technological organizations within the context of both domestic and foreign politics, finance, technology, and bureaucracy. This range is as much the realm of political scientists as it is of naval historians.

The process of pairing historians with political scientists, of course, has its dangers. As William Thompson has so rightly pointed out, one takes the risk that forcing unlike animals to pull a wagon can sometimes result in inefficiency or even in accomplishing nothing at all. That is indeed the risk taken here, but by avoiding disciplinary squabbles among specialists as well as *ad hominem* attacks against each other, we have collectively tried to exchange ideas on approaches to naval history. We publish them now as an attempt to stimulate thinking among all who research, write, and read about navies. Let us all think more carefully and fully about our craft, both in terms of the subject of navies and in terms of the role of naval affairs in the context of wider events.

In this volume, Commander James Goldrick of the Royal Australian Navy lays out the general problem facing modern naval historians. He shows how the fundamental problem began with the introduction of ever more rapidly changing

technologies in the nineteenth century. Demonstrating how this has affected naval affairs, he suggests that historians need to reexamine naval operations more carefully, taking what many historians might regard as a far-outdated topic and applying more sophisticated approaches to it in order to deepen our understanding of the broad inter-relationships in naval affairs.

Jon Sumida and David Rosenberg make a compelling case by proposing an entirely new approach to thinking about navies, outlining a methodology in dealing with finance, bureaucracy and technology that could completely revise standard naval histories. Their thoughts form the fundamental kernel from which a very important new approach can develop. From a political scientist's perspective, Robert Jervis widens out the naval historians' perspective with his own reflections on the general inter-relationship of technology and organizational culture.

Since the time of Alfred Thayer Mahan, the study of naval history has been linked with international affairs. In many respects naval historians have over emphasized this relationship to the exclusion of domestic issues. In the 1970s, Professor Volker Berghahn was one of the pioneers who opened up a new perspective in German naval studies by showing the importance of domestic politics. In this volume, Berghahn elucidates his most recent reflections on the specific issues in German naval history. Commenting on it in terms of broad political science, Robert Wood widens the discussion to suggest parallel and diverging issues in American experience. Noting that domestic issues are essential to understanding a navy in its external roles, Wood goes on to suggest that examination of the characteristics of a regime are important to understanding the character of its armed forces.

In looking at comparative naval history, Paul Halpern uses his detailed knowledge of the First World War in the Mediterranean to discuss a range of interesting issues posed by this particular time and place in naval history. In doing this, Halpern provides a case study, focusing on the research problems posed when examining several navies operating simultaneously, either as allies or enemies. Through this perspective, one can deal with action and reaction between navies and their relationships to different naval cultures. Complementing this, William Thompson takes an equally valid, but quite different perspective on comparative history. Thompson takes the broad view, searching for comparisons over vast stretches of time. From this perspective, he suggests fifty-two propositions about the nature of naval power, emphasizing strategic policy orientations, the implications of domestic structures, conflict behavior and war strategies.

Turning to the broad issues posed in writing a general naval history of a particular country, Nicholas Rodger generalizes from his own current work in preparing a multi-volume study on British naval history. He explains the range of research and insights needed in relating the navy to general national history,

making a clarion call for excellence. Commenting on this from the perspective of an historian of armies, Dennis Showalter relates the specific issues of naval history to the current trends and structural considerations in military history. He suggests that in naval history the skills of the political scientist and the skills of the historian might well converge, profitably producing a synthesis that fully reflects common understanding.

Concluding the volume, Paul Kennedy uses the example of Admiral Tirpitz and the development of the German Navy as a means to suggest the continued need to develop wider, complementary levels of analysis in naval history. Pointing to the inter-connectivity in naval affairs, he suggests the need to understand the complex reality of naval affairs that range from social and cultural issues to technology as well as to high politics and grand strategy. Carrying the point further, Mark Shulman synthesizes the main points of these essays and emphasizes the ever important issue of documentary research. His proposal for an American naval records society, modeled on the example of the century-old Navy Records Society in Britain, argues for both organizational support of the sub-discipline of naval history as well as for the continuing need to make primary source materials available to the general public and for professional officers, researchers and writers.

The issues raised in this set of essays are the key issues that we, as a group, feel are of salient importance in understanding the central issues in modern naval history. These are the issues that Jon Sumida and David Rosenberg identify as comprising the "core" of naval history. They have taken a useful step in identifying another range of issues as "cognate" naval history. This distinction is a very important one, but as Paul Kennedy has suggested in his essay, it should not be understood as the basis for creating an exclusivist approach, but rather related to making a distinction among legitimate and complementary methods, approaches, and levels of studying naval history.

There is a wide range of cognate issues in naval history that deserve consideration and that contribute to knowledge in naval affairs. Cognate aspects of naval affairs include such specialized areas as theory, art, literature, social affairs and so on, that might also be considered aspects of another broad theme, such as intellectual history, social history, art history, sociology, political science or science and technology. Readers and practitioners of naval history must avoid confusing the core and the cognate, but they should ignore neither the inter-relationship nor disparage one over the other. When seen along side a full appreciation of core naval history, cognate naval history becomes particularly important in helping to define the place of naval affairs within the broad context of general affairs.

Naval affairs, after all, are very often a special case of broader issues. On one hand, they fall under the broad rubric of maritime history; on the other, they relate to military issues. In the discussions that took place during the conference

that led to the book *Ubi Sumus?*, many agreed that we must work to rejoin the military and maritime aspects that have only recently become separated in North American and British practices of historical writing.

In terms of the military dimension of naval affairs, it is important to understand the navy as an instrument of national power, both in terms of the sources of its power and in its varying inter-relationships to the nation's diplomatic, military and economic policies, strategies, operations and tactics. Within this context, the issues of joint operations that has become so increasingly important in the past fifty years are very important. But the scope is wider and moves beyond operations to larger issues as well.

For navies, these broader issues lead naturally to commerce at sea, shipbuilding, seamen, port development and the many other issues of sea transportation: the very stuff of maritime history. Maritime history is a broad theme within general historical studies, that by its nature, cuts across standard disciplinary boundaries. A student who pursues the theme may approach it from a variety of vantage points, and at the same time, touch upon a wide variety of other, related approaches, including science, technology, industry, economics, trade, politics, art, literature, ideas, sociology, military and naval affairs, international relations, cartography, comparative studies in imperial and colonial affairs, institutional and organizational development, communications, migration, inter-cultural relations, natural resources and so on. In short, maritime history is a humanistic study of the many dimensions in man's relationship with the sea.

Maritime history focuses on ships and the sailors who operated them, relating an identifiable segment of society to a specific range of technological development and to the hostile geographical area covering seven-tenths of the globe. The relative importance of maritime affairs varies from one period to another in general history; it stands out in some periods and in some cultures and not in others. For example, maritime affairs were an essential aspect of general European and European colonial history in the period from the fifteenth century to the twentieth century. Only recently, in the twentieth century, have alternative means of communication and transport developed and displaced much of the technological, social, economic and industrial fabric that surrounded commercial maritime affairs, although a number of aspects continue, navies among them.

While the subject may seem to brighten and fade for the general historian, a specialist in the subject of maritime history must keep in mind the continuity of maritime development through all periods. Maritime affairs are rarely, if ever, absent in history. At the same time, ships and sailors are not isolated phenomena. They are very much a part of larger developments. In order to understand what happened at sea and to analyze the effect of those events, one needs to relate them and interpret them in the context of broad issues that were occurring on land. Maritime history is, in many respects, only an extension of events on land, but it does involve a variety of technical and specialist issues, such as ship-build-

ing, navigation, naval gunnery and tactics, marine engineering, hydrography, and so on. In order to understand these elements, which are key factors in maritime history, maritime historians must explain them in terms of the broadest context, while at the same time, they must come to grip with the details and make sense of the specific developments within that special area.

One of the main problems for maritime historians is the need to see events at sea in terms of a variety of perspectives. For example, a ship that was built in a particular country was a product of certain national political, economic, social, technological and industrial factors. When the same ship sailed at sea, it entered a different realm with an international dimension that may involve such additional factors as wars, cross-cultural relations, imperial competition, scientific research, the exchange of goods or the accumulation of capital through international trade.

Additionally, when ships left land and the network of activities that created and prepared them, they spent long isolated periods at sea. This unusual experience created a social dimension within the ships that, itself, became a new factor, creating microcosms of land-based societies while bringing them into various new environments and new experiences. These experiences, in turn, were reflected back into land-based societies as sailors returned from the sea. In this area, as in others, maritime affairs typically acted as both a conduit as well as a separate channel of development. In this, they illustrate the relationship between core and cognate histories.

Cognate naval history is as wide as naval experience, intellectual insight and scholarship can make it. Historical sociologists,[4] for example, have already made some very interesting contributions as have art historians.[5] Work is just beginning in literature and naval fiction, although studies on some literary figures such as Herman Melville whose work touched on the navy are well established and the series of volumes in The Classics of Naval Literature series has established the beginnings for a canon to be considered.[6] Among related issues, those surrounding recent popular culture and naval fiction remain to be seriously examined.[7] In science and technology, there are a wide variety

[4] Donald MacKenzie, *Inventing Accuracy: A Historical Sociology of Nuclear Missile Guidance* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990).

[5] Richard L. Stein, "Remember the *Téméraire*: Turner's Memorial of 1839," *Representations* 11 (Summer 1985), pp. 165-200; David Cordingly, *Nicholas Pocock 1740-1821* (London: Conway, 1986); Deutches Marine Institut und Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, herausgeber, *Seefahrt und Geschichte* (Herford und Bonn: Verlag E.S. Mittler & Sohn GMBH, 1986).

[6] The Classics of Sea Power series (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1984-present) has helped to identify a basic canon.

[7] The work of novelist Tom Clancy in the Cold War period, for example as well as the large range of other periods in historical fiction could be examined. There are some works on naval fiction in the age of sail. See, A.E. Cunningham, *Patrick O'Brian: Critical Essays and Bibliography* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1994); Frank Adam, *Hornblower, Bolitho & Co.: Krieg unter Segeln in Roman und Geschichte* (Frankfurt: Ullstein, 1992); and the bibliography of similar historical novels in Dean King, et.al., eds.,

of issues. Important strides have already been made in the history of naval medicine and hydrography, but many of these tend to concentrate on earlier periods, not the twentieth century. Certainly there are numerous other areas for consideration. Contributions in these areas all contribute to our understanding of the place of naval affairs in general history. The progress in historical understanding that studies on earlier periods provide can guide development in creating approaches to the different world and new issues posed by twentieth century naval affairs.

Although focusing on ships and sailors, maritime and naval historians deal in the interrelationship of events on land and at sea, dealing simultaneously with integrated, parallel, and unique aspects. As maritime and naval historians move forward in their researches, they must also strive to compare and to contrast maritime events at different times, in different circumstances, and in different contexts. As a theme in general history, maritime and naval history is not separate from other aspects of historical study. Nevertheless, it involves a wide range of specialized learning and knowledge that justifies the identification of maritime and naval history as one of the many legitimate fields for historical research and writing. Identifying the field in this way, however, neither removes it from the accepted standards of the best historical scholarship nor creates any unique standards or exclusive prerogatives for those who follow it. It merely recognizes that the topic is broad enough to identify fully a range of specialization and that it is complicated enough to sustain the wide-ranging work of a number of scholars devoting their scholarly careers to working on differing aspects of the theme.

To understand sea affairs, maritime and naval historians must analyze them within the context of the broadest issues, while at the same time understanding and explaining the specific maritime and naval aspects. Like any good piece of historical analysis on a specific theme, historians working in maritime and naval history strive to make a contribution to knowledge on a small, but not isolated sector of that front. While they may limit themselves in scope to either commercial maritime or naval matters, the questions that they answer must also have a discernible relationship with problems of more general interest. In this it is important to maintain an awareness of the relationship between core and cognate historical work, between different and complementary methods, levels, and approaches.

The hull of the old ship of naval history, stripped of her tackle and ornament may well be food for worms, but the subject on which naval historians focus should not be overlooked or lost. It can appear again in a new model, corrected and amended by a new breed of historians, who work with wider viewpoints

A Sea of Words (New York: Holt, 1995). The classic work in this field for the age of sail is C.N. Robinson, _The British Tar in Fact and Fiction_ (London: Harper, 1909) and the anthology by C. Northcote Parkinson, ed., _Portsmouth Point: The Navy in Fiction 1793-1815_ (Liverpool: University Press of Liverpool, 1948).

and on firm intellectual foundations. Along those lines, the essays in this volume provide some valuable insights and offer stimulating ideas on new approaches that promote excellence in doing naval history.

PART I
Bureaucracy and Technology

Chapter 1
The Problems of Modern Naval History

James Goldrick

This paper argues that modern naval history requires a new approach on the part of naval historians to satisfy the demands of the subject. This new approach must improve on previous historiography by focusing on the core roles of navies and analyzing much more comprehensively the multitude of technological, financial and operational issues involved in decision making for naval development. In so doing, historians of the modern era will need to achieve a technical mastery of their subject which has hitherto largely been confined to students of the age of sail.

In discussing modern naval history as a subject in itself, the first step is to determine at what point in time navies entered a modern era. For the purposes of this paper, a simple definition can be offered: modern naval history begins at the point when steam power becomes the principal propulsive mechanism for combat. This occurred in the late 1840s, when the Anglo-French naval rivalry saw the conversion of old ships of the line and the construction of screw propelled sailing battleships.[1]

The history of the age of fighting sail has been extensively treated and there exists a body of scholarship which comprehends the administrative, social, technological and operational aspects of that era. There is also an assumption within this body of work that navies are legitimate subjects for examination in their own right. Historians of the period frequently acknowledge that navies represented in many ways the most sophisticated of contemporary organizations which produced solutions to complex problems of logistics, materiel and administration well before even the existence of such challenges had been comprehended elsewhere within governments and societies at large. John

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[1] See D.K. Brown, *Before the Ironclad—Development of Ship Design, Propulsion and Armament in the Royal Navy, 1815-1860* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1990), pp. 122-129.

Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough, was reflecting the judgement of both his time and of posterity when he remarked to a fellow soldier:

> The sea service is not so easily managed as that of the land. There are many more precautions to take and you and I are not capable of judging them.[2]

The Admiralty, for example, was the greatest of the British Departments of State for hundreds of years. One of the most prominent historians of the eighteenth century navy, Nicholas Rodger, has written:

> Before the twentieth century, no British government ever undertook a more onerous task than providing a fleet, or faced in a more acute form the problems of administration on a large scale. In early modern Europe, navies were the largest, costliest and technically the most advanced organizations of their day; the hazards of putting a fleet to sea in the sixteenth century were equivalent to those of putting a man on the moon in the twentieth.[3]

That judgement is confirmed for the seventeenth century by such studies as Carla Rahn Phillips's *Six Galleons for the King of Spain*[4] and Nicholas Rodger's own work, the remarkable study of the Royal Navy in the eighteenth century, *The Wooden World*,[5] goes far to demonstrate the continuing relative sophistication of naval activity. These two are certainly amongst the most outstanding of recent years, but the point is that they represent only a small part of a substantial and coherent body of work on sailing navies which has been built up since the late nineteenth century.[6]

The material covering the last hundred and fifty years does not possess the same coherence nor the same serious attention to the history of navies in their own right, as opposed to their influence on other affairs.

This is a serious claim that must be justified.

The fundamental cause is the issue of technology, which operates in two ways. The first is the difficulty posed to the historian by the pace and scale of technological change. The second is the "opacity" factor in technology. Broadly stated, as technology becomes more sophisticated, the nature of the change which it is undergoing becomes progressively more difficult to assess. This is simply illustrated. The differences between the last wooden battleships and the

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[2] Cited in R.D. Heinl, *Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1966), p. 206.

[3] N.A.M. Rodger, *The Admiralty* (Lavenham, Suffolk: Terrence Dalton, 1979), p. x.

[4] Carla Rahn Phillips, *Six Galleons for the King of Spain: Imperial Defense in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1984).

[5] N.A.M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (London: Collins, 1986).

[6] For one of the earliest works which remains useful as a history, see Julian S. Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy, with a History of the Rise of England as a Maritime Power* (London: Longmans, Green, 1898). Two volumes.

ironclad *Warrior* were not simply profound in themselves, they had a visual impact on the observer which was dramatic. Lying with the old wooden craft, *Warrior* and her sister ship, *Black Prince*, were aptly described as the "black snakes amongst the rabbits."[7] But no layman could now comprehend from the external view the profound—even revolutionary—changes which have taken place within warships in the last thirty years through the advent of the computer age. Despite the fact that weapon ranges and operational horizons have extended five or six fold, the guided missile destroyer of 1965 looks little different to that of today. But it is in no way the same ship.

On the question of pace and scale, it is more difficult to convey in any straightforward fashion the extent to which the problems of naval warfare became more complicated. One can best illustrate this by focusing on the threat to the battleship and taking a sounding at thirty or twenty year intervals—with a five year bracket in the Second World War. The progress between 1860 and 1945 demonstrates the point. (See Table 1) From the time at which the only open water threats to a battleship were the elements or another battleship, we have evolved to a situation in which it can be threatened on, over or under the sea, in all weathers and at all times of day. This table should not, of course, be considered in only one dimension. The battleship itself, with its remarkable capacity to absorb punishment and its heavy (and eventually radar equipped) gun armament, represented a formidable proposition to anything which came within range of its weapons. These qualities go some way to explain the retention of the battleship past the Second World War, and even the temporary return to service of the type during the 1980s.

The problem of understanding naval warfare becomes progressively more profound as we move from the nineteenth into the twentieth century. There is another factor, which complicated contemporary analysis—that is, the definition and planning of naval technological policy—just as much as it has made life difficult for the historian. This is the effective absence of fleet-on-fleet en-counters from the onset of steam propulsion until the Russo-Japanese War in 1904. Apart from the Battle of Lissa in 1866, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, and certain actions in the American Civil War—and these were usually related to attacks on land fortifications—the battles which did take place were generally individual ship-on-ship encounters and rarely involved the great powers.

The result was that operational art transferred itself from a basis of practical experience to a largely theoretical and thus unprovable level. In modern terms, it was impossible to validate fully either materiel or tactics because there was no test of war. Thus, the development of doctrine, the planning to operate and fight at sea, had to proceed almost wholly on the basis of theories which, however well conceived, were resting on intrinsically uncertain foundations.

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[7] Oscar Parkes, *British Battleships 1860-1950* (London: Seeley, Service & Co, 1957), p. 15.

At the same time, the fact that technology was evolving in new ways and at an uncertain pace meant that the context in which decisions were made was itself evolving continuously and unpredictably. In some circumstances, and there are parallels here in the revolution in modern computing, the context for technological and operational decision making could experience profound changes *within months*, not the years or decades with which earlier eras tended to deal. If the resulting problems which contemporary decision makers faced could be appalling, we should not be surprised that their complexity has often proved too much for historians.

The researcher's problems are magnified because navies operate on three interconnected levels in relation to making policy for war fighting. The most difficult for the external observer to assess is the organization of a navy to face current threats, the development of doctrine and policy for the operation of existing ships and equipment. This is the work of fleet staffs, tactical schools and supporting commands. It is inherently highly classified and the associated documentation both arcane and transient, if it exists at all. Historical analysis of the material which does exist in archives requires a sophisticated understanding of the subjects under examination. This is because the original audience for any document already comprehended the problems and the circumstances involved and was interested only in the solution.

Table One: The Threat To The Battleship

Date	Threat	Offshore	Range	All Weather	Night
1860	Mine	No	Contact	Yes	Yes
1890	Mine	Yes	Contact	Yes	Yes
	Torpedo	Yes	2,000 meters	No	No
1910	Mine	Yes	Contact	Yes	Yes
	Torpedo	Yes	10,000 meters	Yes	Yes
	Submarine	Yes	2,000 meters	Yes	Yes
1940	Mine	Yes	150 meters	Yes	Yes
	Torpedo	Yes	20,000 meters	Yes	Yes
	Submarine	Yes	6,000 meters	Yes	Yes
	Aircraft	Yes	150 miles	No	Yes
1945	Mine	Yes	300 meters	Yes	Yes
	Torpedo	Yes	20,000 meters	Yes	Yes
	Submarine	Yes	10,000 meters	Yes	Yes
	Aircraft	Yes	350 miles	Yes	Yes
	Guided Missile	Yes	20,000 meters	Yes	Yes

Note: Ranges are approximations for clarity based on an estimate of the *effective* ranges which could be achieved.

The second level is the modification of existing systems to meet perceived deficiencies, achieve new capabilities or match emerging threats. Although the

intent is similar, this differs from the base level in that the nature and extent of the work required are such as to put it outside the capability of the seagoing forces to implement with their own resources or with those of the customary supporting organizations. The historian can more easily understand these processes because approaches to external authorities and the involvement of main naval staffs inevitably require comprehensive documentation in the process of justifying the allocation of funds.

The third level provides at once the clearest and also the most treacherous ground for the historian. This is the determination of the future force structure, the processes by which staff requirements are originated and developed for new ships and new equipment. The clarity derives from the fact that much of the process is comprehensively documented; the treachery is due to the reality that not all staff requirements are generated according to technical or even strategic imperatives. Some may be what are, in work-place negotiations, termed as "ambit claims." Others may be stalking horses to put pressure on competing projects or to satisfy an external authority, particularly political. It is also the case that some critical staff requirements may never be produced at all, because the staff capacity does not exist to do the analysis. What the historian sees may therefore not be what he wants or needs.

Let me illustrate the difficulties of the modern naval historian with two historical problems, still not wholly resolved, both related to the Royal Navy in the twentieth century. The first is in the origins of the battle cruiser, brainchild of Admiral Sir John "Jacky" Fisher. The second concerns the evolution of the aircraft carrier.

The Battle Cruiser

In 1906, the British commissioned the all big gun, turbine-engined *Dreadnought*. Heavily armored, firing twice the broadside of any contemporary battleship and several knots faster, she represented such a leap in all round fighting powers that, at a stroke, she rendered obsolete the battle fleets of every navy in the world and set the standard for future capital ship construction.

Two years later there appeared the first of the battle cruisers, the *Invincible* class. These ships combined almost the firepower of the *Dreadnought* with much higher speed, but sacrificed protection to gain that speed. At that time and since, the roles of the battle cruiser type were hotly debated. In retrospect, it seems that the battle cruiser would only be useful so long as no opponent built ships which were just as fast and as heavily gunned but were more adequately armored.

The battle cruiser emerged at a time when the British were increasingly focused upon the threat from Germany, the geography of which dictated a preoccupation with the prospect of a general fleet action, something which the Germans would have to seek if they were to avoid being blockaded in their ports by the Royal Navy. The likely battleground, the southern North Sea, was also

notorious for its poor weather and restricted visibility, which put naval forces at constant risk of being surprised by a superior enemy.[8]

When the Great War came, the battle cruiser, at least the British version, bore out the forebodings of the critics. Three blew up and sank at the Battle of Jutland, ostensibly victims of their inadequate protection, at the hands of the more "balanced" (that is, more heavily armored) German battle cruisers. As a separate type, the battle cruiser did not survive that experience in the Royal Navy and even the last to commission, the ill–fated *Hood*, was more accurately described as a fast battleship, with imperfect rather than inadequate armor. Thus the judgement of history runs.[9]

That judgement is wrong or, to put it most charitably, grossly oversimplified. Recent research is only beginning to make clear the tangle of financial, technical and strategic issues which were mixed up in the genesis and later development of the battle cruiser type. The whole story is still by no means clear.[10]

It is not enough to label the battle cruiser as merely the ill–conceived brainchild of a single man who would not acknowledge the central flaw in his theories. The original idea behind the battle cruiser was not to be part of the battle fleet, but to hunt down the enemy cruisers and merchant raiders which threatened British shipping routes and which Fisher believed to be the greatest danger to Britain's well being. At the turn of the century, the perceived maritime threat was not Germany alone, but France and Russia, which in concert represented not only an increasing material force in their developing battle fleets but a widely dispersed one with their numerous cruisers.

This dispersal would present almost insuperable difficulties to the hard pressed Royal Navy. Britain not only had to match the European powers in battleship construction, but build equally expensive and manpower intensive armored cruisers for commerce protection. Even for the United Kingdom, the financial implications of attempting to maintain superiority at all points and against all rivals were too much.

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[8] See the author's book, *The King's Ships Were at Sea: The War in the North Sea August 1914—February 1915* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1984).

[9] See, as a recent and prominent example, Robert K. Massie *Dreadnought: Britain, Germany and the Coming of the Great War* (New York: Random House, 1991), pp. 490-497.

[10] For the following account, I am indebted to the work of Dr. Jon Tetsuro Sumida of the University of Maryland and to Dr. Nicholas Lambert of Wolfson College, Oxford University. This brief synthesis, however, is only a summary of *some* of the judgments which may be drawn from research to date. The nature of both historians' work is such that they—and we—are learning all the time. See Jon Tetsuro Sumida, *In Defense of Naval Supremacy: Finance, Technology and British Naval Policy 1889-1914* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989); "Sir John Fisher and the *Dreadnought*: the sources of Naval Mythology," a paper delivered to the Eleventh Naval History Symposium, Annapolis, October 1993. See also: Nicholas Lambert "Admiral Sir John Fisher and the Concept of Flotilla Defence 1904-09," *Journal of Modern History*, (Fall 1995), forthcoming; and "British Naval Policy 1913/14: Financial Limitation and Strategic Revolution," *Journal of Military History*, (Fall 1995), forthcoming.

Fisher's interest in alternative approaches was crystallized when he commanded the Mediterranean Fleet during the Boer War and at a nadir of British prestige in Europe. He seized on torpedo craft, including the submersibles which were beginning to demonstrate their operational potential, as the best means of neutralizing enemy battle fleets close to their own ports and bases. This concept of "flotilla defence" would be combined with fast, long ranged and heavily armed ships to hunt down and destroy enemy commerce raiders. Such a force mix held the possibility not only of holding at bay any possible anti-British coalition but doing so at relatively limited cost.

The Anglo-Japanese Treaty of 1902 and the progressive engagement of France and Russia in an *Entente* with Britain would change the strategic situation profoundly in the next few years, but it is important to remember that these political developments were by no means as coherent or comprehensible at the time as they appear now. In particular, the Royal Navy, despite a progressive concentration of forces into British home waters, never ceased to regard its strategic problems without some recognition of the continuing needs of the Mediterranean and other stations further afield. That such a wider view of strategy existed between 1904 and 1914 has not always been recognized by historians of the era.

What roles, then, for the battle cruiser? The key lay in gunnery technology. Beginning in 1898, radical improvements were achieved by the Royal Navy in range and accuracy which within a few years extended fighting ranges from 2 to 3,000 meters to as much as 8,000. At this point, however, manual aiming and prediction of individual weapons began to become difficult to the point of ineffectiveness. At the time in which the dreadnought and battle cruiser designs were being put into production, the Royal Navy embarked upon an extensive program of experiments to develop computerized gunnery fire control systems. The long and complex story of that program and its eventual misdirection is outside my scope. The key issues, however, can be highlighted by pointing out two things. First, British gunnery policy changed direction drastically at least four times in the decade before 1914. Such changes of direction, however ill–conceived in retrospect, were not driven by a desire to increase or to minimize the fighting range for its own sake, but because those responsible for the fighting efficiency of the Royal Navy were convinced that they were necessary to achieve superiority in battle. This situation alone is indicative of the *uncertainty* of the development processes. It must be understood that naval decision making at the first and second levels, within which this situation existed, is more often focused on solving contemporary problems within a limited time scale rather than achieving an "ideal" solution. In short, the question is "how?" not "what if?"

Second, the technology issue was never confined to the gunnery fire control problem alone. At one point, it became apparent that the new "capped" armor piercing shell was capable of penetrating any armor at ranges of 6,000 meters or

less.[11] This obviously lent weight to the concept of a fast, heavily armed ship which would close to overwhelm an opponent with her weight of fire. Third, the torpedo was itself gaining in range and capability through improved propulsion and accompanying increases in size. The advantage retained by the gun since the invention of quick firing weapons late in the previous century was thus being subjected to serious erosion. Sophisticated fire control might hold the potential for recovery.

In these circumstances, a vision of the battle cruiser developed in which it seemed possible to marry a predictive fire control system with the fast ship to produce a vessel which could not only dictate the fighting range but which could score hits at a distance at which it would be effectively invulnerable to less sophisticated opposition. It is not surprising that armor seemed superfluous to Fisher.

The criticism of Fisher's schemes has been that, however elegant the combination of battle cruiser and fire control might seem, it could only be temporary. It is an axiom of competitive technological development that the greatest step towards duplicating an innovation is the recognition itself that the innovation has been achieved. Britain's rivals would eventually produce their own fire control systems and fit them into balanced, more heavily armored ships.

Eventually, that is. But Fisher's conception of the battle cruiser was not monochrome, nor did he ever regard it as a final solution to naval warfare. Rather, just as the *Dreadnought* itself had improved Britain's position by imposing an informal but highly effective 'holiday' on overseas battleship construction which lasted anywhere between eighteen months and four years,[12] so the battle cruiser would dislocate foreign programs. Britain would thus retain the initiative in both operational and financial spheres. What might follow as the Royal Navy's next move could be anything from ocean going submarines to enlarged torpedo boat destroyers.

Unconsciously or not, Fisher was perhaps the first to grasp that rapid developments in technology changed the fundamental measures by which force structures and thus the balance of power were judged from *types to capabilities*. Relationships between capabilities were inherently dynamic, not static. Without the test of battle, this meant that the uncertainty over judgements as to relative strengths greatly increased. In turn, the advantage, at least in the perceptions which affect decision making for future force structures, the 'third level' already described, had to lie with the latest innovation, the 'super weapon' whose potential could only be guessed at.

The capability issue possessed another element. Hitherto, naval force structures had been largely symmetrical Fleets could be matched and graded against

[11] Jon Tetsuro Sumida, *In Defense of Naval Supremacy*, pp. 55-56.

[12] The Germans, for example, did not lay down a capital ship between August 1905 and June 1907. See Antony Preston, *Battleships of World War I* (London: Lionel Leventhal, 1972), pp. 64-67.

each other with relative ease. Battleships fought battleships; cruisers and scouts expected to face other cruisers and scouts. The advent of the torpedo was but the first step in the breakdown of this system. It conferred what Corbett described as "battle power" on small craft.[13] There would be more such changes to come.

The French *Jeune École* had recognized some part of this process and its implications, but not enough. Their thinking was too fixated upon the vulnerability of a British Fleet in close blockade. Such a policy was not just itself vulnerable to technical change; it remained valid only so long as the British strategies did not alter. What Fisher seems to have grasped is that force structures are best defined by the tasks which navies must undertake to meet national interests and not an overreaching requirement to destroy the enemy's main fleet for its own sake. To the technological thrust towards asymmetry, he thus added a strategic one.

All this reversed the assumption which had supported British policy for most of the nineteenth century that the Royal Navy would follow innovation rather than initiate it. The reversion was the more logical because it reflected the reality that a precondition of the old policy, Britain's overwhelming economic and industrial strength, no longer applied. I should add that this policy had in no way limited the Royal Navy's approach to development once a weapon was introduced into the order of battle elsewhere. Other navies might be the first to secure such systems, the British were often the first to make them work.

The battle cruiser must thus be judged, not as Fisher's panacea for maritime combat, but as a weapon which represented, even had it been brought to perfection through the installation of effective fire control, but one element in an attempt to preserve strategic advantage by technical innovation in a period of financial semi-crisis.

There is a connection for Australia in all this. Battle cruisers were utilized in the role of anti-commerce raiders only once, in 1914, culminating in the destruction of the armored cruisers of the German East Asiatic Squadron by the heavy guns of the battle cruisers *Invincible* and *Inflexible* at the First Battle of the Falkland Islands in December that year. The British ships had the spectacular role. Less well–known is the fact that the battle cruiser *Australia*, commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy only a year earlier, was the principal reason why the German cruisers never entered Australian waters. The eight twelve inch guns of the *Australia* represented perhaps the most effective—and timely—strategic deterrent in which Australia has invested.

The Aircraft Carrier

Let me turn to my second case study. The Royal Navy and its senior commanders have been seriously criticized by historians for the inadequate

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[13] I am indebted to Dr. Nicholas Lambert for this argument: Letter to the author, 6 February 1995.

development of the aircraft carrier and of naval aviation between 1919 and 1939, particularly by comparison with the Americans and Japanese.[14] More than one commentator has laid these failures directly at the door of conservative admirals preoccupied with the big gun to the exclusion of all else.[15] In consequence, British carriers were operating fragile biplanes and unsuitable conversions of land aircraft at a time when Japan had aircraft such as the *Zero* and the United States, the *Hellcat*.

The British failure is undeniable and institutional conservatism centered on the battleship undoubtedly played its role. So did the vexed question of divided control which occupied the central staffs of the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force for most of the inter-war period. Consider, however, other circumstances. First, the pre-1939 aircraft carrier was not an "all weather" system. It could not operate aircraft in rough seas or in poor visibility—and often not at night. Second, economic conditions meant that the Royal Navy was forced to operate small and elderly conversions for much longer than it desired. Such ships carried too few machines to mount the large scale strike operations staged by the Pacific powers. There was also too few aircraft. Money for naval aviation had to be found within a budget over-stressed by the need to maintain large operational forces world-wide as a result of Britain's strategic over-extension. A large carrier cost more to operate than a battleship.

British naval aviation suffered from conservatism from the bottom. This was a curious and largely unrecognized result of the fact that the creation of a separate Royal Air Force in 1918 robbed the Royal Navy of the cream of its experienced personnel. In the United States and Imperial Japanese Navies, commanders with flying experience forced the pace, taking risks with aircraft and ships which resulted in higher casualty rates but also produced much more efficient and faster operating cycles. American and Japanese carriers could launch and recover aircraft more rapidly than the British and could marshal their machines in the air more quickly. For example, it was British doctrine that each aircraft had to be struck down to the hangar deck after it had landed on before the next would be allowed onto the flight deck. This meant an interval between aircraft of up to three minutes—between four and six times more than the intervals achieved by the other carrier navies. Conversely, the British, who had adopted closed hangars, integral to the ships' hulls (for very good reasons of ship survivability), as opposed to the lighter structures of the Americans, could not allow aircraft to

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[14] For sources on this subject, see Norman Friedman, *British Carrier Aviation: The Evolution of the Ships and their Aircraft* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1988); Geoffrey Till, *Air Power and the Royal Navy 1911-1945: A Historical Survey* (London: Jane's, 1979); Stephen Roskill, *Naval Policy Between the War* (London: Collins, 1968 and 1976); and Jon Tetsuro Sumida, "'The Best Laid Plan: The Development of British Battle Fleet Tactics 1919-1942," *International History Review*, 14 (November 1992).

[15] See, for example, Arthur J. Marder, "*The Influence of History on Sea Power: The Royal Navy and the Lessons of 1914-1918*," *From the Dardanelles to Oran: Studies of the Royal Navy in War and Peace 1915-1940* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 56-57.

start and warm their engines up before they were brought up to the flight deck. All of these factors added up to lengthen the reaction times for the British and reduce the effective operational ranges for their aircraft by about one–third compared to the Americans or the Japanese. When this means the difference between an operational radius of 180 miles and one of 120, it can be important. Let me illustrate this with a short scenario.

We are watching a hypothetical exercise in the Atlantic in 1932. It is one hour before dawn and a carrier force in the east is pitted against a heavy cruiser force in the west. At 0500, each side detects radio transmissions from the other and, thus, knows the bearing but not the range of the opposition. Although each assumes that the opposition is in the vicinity, they are in fact one hundred miles apart. Each determines to launch a scouting aircraft at dawn since their aircraft cannot operate at night. In each case, the scout is a Fairey IIIF biplane; the cruiser's machine is a float plane, the carrier's, a land plane. Each has a speed of one hundred knots. The weather is clear and the sea slight, apparently ideal conditions for air operations at sea. But note the first problem for the carrier—the wind is from the west, which means that the ship must steam *towards* the cruisers when launching or recovering aircraft. If she is operating any kind of air patrols this means that, at best, she cannot make ground to the east to keep her distance from the cruisers. In reality, she could well be making ground to the west, despite her best intentions.

If all the equipment works and, accepting favorable times for the carrier to recover the scout and organize an eighteen aircraft strike (which against a three cruiser force is a threat but not necessarily a decisive one), we get the following figures: The carrier's aircraft would be able to achieve a strike when the cruisers were still out of range at thirty-two miles. But, if the radio of the scouting aircraft failed—and this was a not uncommon occurrence—the equation becomes very different. The cruisers are approaching gun range at fourteen miles. This may perhaps explain why carriers built in the 1920s carried 5.5", 6" or even 8" guns (as in the case of the American carriers, *Lexington and Saratoga*.) The margins of superiority were too small to do otherwise.

An associated question is why the British exhibited so little apparent interest in single-seat fighters for air defense? First, such aircraft were of little use in other roles, with minimal range, no load carrying capability and very tentative navigation over water—important considerations when a carrier could not carry many aircraft in the first place. Second, and more importantly, small carriers with limited capacity simply could not carry enough fighters to maintain a credible air patrol overhead. Before radar, the first warning of an air attack was visual. This meant that the carrier might not have enough time to launch its fighters and for them to gain height and enter the action before the attackers launched their bombs or torpedoes. The emphasis on anti-aircraft fire rather than air cover must thus be seen in this light, in addition to "gunnery conservatism."

These explanations of the Fleet Air Arm's problems cannot wholly exonerate the Royal Navy from its use of air power, nor are they complete in themselves. Nevertheless, they should indicate that there were other key issues than interservice politics or institutional conservatism. It is an error to mislabel simple truth as simplicity; it is equally wrong to mistake a simple explanation for the whole truth.

Conclusion

What points can be drawn from these examples? The first is the straightforward one that naval history is not easy. If we are to achieve any improvement in our understanding of navies in the machine age, there must be a new approach to the subject, one which integrates the elements of technology, finance, strategy, operations and personnel in achieving an understanding of the subject. I hasten to add that I am not suggesting that only naval officers can be good naval historians.

But I am suggesting that we venture into naval history at our peril and that only extensive and lengthy study and a deep comprehension of the issues will suffice. A recent example of the problem is John Keegan, a military historian of great talent whose study of land warfare, *The Face of Battle*, combines magisterial authority with a remarkably fluent and gripping style. By comparison, his 1988 book *The Price of Admiralty: The Evolution of Naval Warfare* maintains the quality of prose, but possesses nothing like the insight of his *military* work. It takes a long time to "grow" expert naval historians and they do not necessarily come from the backgrounds which might be expected. Amongst the finest recent work on the history of warship design and construction is that by Norman Friedman, whose doctorate is in Physics.[16]

The second point is that navies need to be studied for their own sakes and in relation to the tasks which navies exist to undertake in war. I cannot stress this point too much. For too long, the tendency has been to examine navies in relation to their effect on other issues, such as diplomacy. This is to confuse the shadow with the substance. Despite the rhetoric encompassing the many uses of maritime power and, in particular, the diplomatic uses of a navy in peacetime as a means of exerting national influence and demonstrating national presence, it is their *war fighting roles* which determine the force structures and organizations of navies.

In this context little has changed from the navies of the sailing age. "Take it all in all." said John Ruskin, "a Ship of the Line is the most honourable thing that man, as a gregarious animal, has ever produced."[17] The implicit point remains: the achievements of the gregarious animal. The interest to outsiders in the navy for its own sake derives from the fact that navies remain amongst the most complex organizations within any society. They must solve, on a day to

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[16] See, for example, Norman Friedman, *U.S. Destroyers: An Illustrated Design History* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1982).

[17] Cited in Grant Uden, *The Fighting Téméraire* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell,1961), p. 10.

day basis, highly complicated problems of technology, of logistics and of social interaction. They must possess the capacity to adapt constantly to changing environments and to changing equipment. They must be capable of operating at great distances from any base, efficiently under threat of attack, while maintaining crew cohesion and morale. I would suggest that the complexity of the entire problem is so great that navies remain inherently at the leading edge of problem solving in many areas, not least of them social.

Given this inherent complexity, it is axiomatic that valid histories must possess equally sophisticated methodologies which achieve a synthesis of archival and other sources and are written *with an appropriate level of technical understanding of the subject*. My favorable citation of much recent work in naval history makes it clear that I think a renaissance in modern naval history is, albeit on too small a scale, underway. But I do see that there is one area which has not yet been comprehensively examined in anything like the necessary detail. I return to my earlier point about combat at sea being the touchstone of naval history, the proof of the extent to which navies achieved the reality of their own self images. We need to extend the same methodologies now in employment in the 1904–1914 period to operational history, in particular to major conflicts such as the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05 and the First and Second World Wars. The legacy of the official histories is no longer enough, even if we accept the political and security constraints under which they were written. Indeed, the discoveries of the 1904–1914 period and in other periods, such as the development of naval aviation, suggest that much of what we have accepted as valid "core" history is in fact mistaken.

The acknowledgement of the importance of signals intelligence which followed on the revelations concerning Allied cryptological successes against the Germans and Japanese in the Second World War is but one step in the right direction.[18] We now need to incorporate the whole range of technological and operational issues and accept that the result may not be as we expected and may differ very widely from previous work. It can be done, and it is being done,[19] but much more is needed and not only for the more immediately apparent aspects of the early electronic age, such as radar. This will be neither easy nor quick, but it will be well worth the effort.[20]

[18] An Australian example of the emerging intelligence history work which places signals intelligence in the correct context is: David Stevens, "The Role of Radio Intelligence in the Anti-Submarine War Around Australia, 1942-45," *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, 25 (October 1994), pp. 23-30.

[19] See also, as an example, David Zimmerman, *The Great Naval Battle of Ottawa* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989).

[20] The author is indebted to Dr. David Rosenberg and Dr. Jon Sumida, whose much more sophisticated arguments for the improvement of naval history are contained in the following chapter on "Machines, Manufacturing, Management and Money: The Study of Navies as Complex Organisations and the Transformation of Twentieth Century Naval History." See also, David Alan Rosenberg, "Process: The Realities of Formulating Modern Naval Strategy" in James Goldrick and John B. Hattendorf, eds., *Mahan Is Not Enough: The Proceedings of a Conference on the Works of Sir Julian Corbett and Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond* (Newport: Naval War College Press, 1993), pp. 141-176.

Chapter 2
Machines, Men, Manufacturing, Management, and Money: The Study of Navies as Complex Organizations and the Transformation of Twentieth Century Naval History

Jon Tetsuro Sumida and David Alan Rosenberg

Twentieth century naval history as a scholarly area of concentration appears to be upon the brink of major change with respect to sources, methods, conceptual frameworks, and standards. For present purposes, the twentieth century means the one hundred years from the late 1880s to the late 1980s, a period of rapid technological advance and chronic great power antagonism, punctuated by global conflict that involved naval operations of unprecedented scale. During this era of industrialized naval rivalry and war, the major powers built large and technically up-to-date fleets. These forces were manned by a highly skilled labor force and led by well educated professionals. The ships and personnel, in turn, had to be supported by a considerable industrial establishment and administered by a complex bureaucracy. And the costs of all of this imposed a substantial financial burden upon the state. Much of what shaped the character of twentieth century navies, therefore, hinged on matters related to machines, men, manufacturing, management, and money.

The coverage of these individual issues has left much to be desired. The quantity of writing on naval technology is admittedly considerable, but often strong on description at the expense of analysis and concentrated to an overwhelming degree on warships and warship design, with relatively little attention devoted to the systematic examination of significant technical infrastructure—that is, such matters as gunlaying and fire control mechanisms, data transmission systems (within ships, between ships, and from ship to shore), optical and electronic sensors, and the finer points of steam, gas turbine, or nuclear engineering. There are a number of historical studies of naval personnel, but in general these have failed to explore the relationship between social characteristics and dynamics on the one hand, and institutional function and effectiveness on the other. Books dealing with the warship construction industry of any country

and its connection to the civilian shipbuilding sector and the economy as a whole are remarkably few. The history of naval administration over the past hundred years has attracted so little scholarship that more is known about that subject in the age of sail than in the age of steam. And the taking into account of naval finance at best rarely proceeds beyond discussion of aggregate annual expenditure, and practically never addresses borrowing or the distribution of spending between personnel, shipbuilding, ship maintenance, training, administration, and the subheadings thereof.

Naval technical, personnel, economic, administrative, and financial questions were also interrelated. The characteristics of warships were decided by deliberations that were concerned with much more than strategy, tactics, and naval architecture. The size, kind, and numbers of units were always to a greater or lesser degree limited by financial and industrial considerations. The design, development, and production of ordnance and other equipment were more or less influenced by not only the availability of capital and labor, but by the nature of the procurement bureaucracy. The effectiveness of fighting vessels in war depended to a great extent upon the state of training of their officers and crews, and the degree of their serviceability on the one hand and the capacity of the logistical apparatus on the other—that is upon a combination of technical, human, administrative, and economic factors. But given incomplete or over-generalized understandings of naval machines, men, manufacturing, management, and money, important questions about the connections between them have for the most part not even been asked, to say nothing of being answered.

These large deficiencies in knowledge about basic issues, however, have until recently caused few difficulties for most historians of twentieth century naval affairs. To understand this situation, it is first necessary to describe the nature of the various forms of naval history as it is generally practiced and their relationships to each other. Serious naval history—which for present purposes includes official and for want of a better term quasi-scholarly as well as academic works—may be divided into three groups—core, ancillary, and cognate.

Core naval history consists of the standard narrative histories of naval policy and operations—set up either as national or comparative accounts—which establish the master plot. Their authors sometimes acknowledged the influence of technical, economic, administrative, and financial factors, but did not investigate these matters rigorously in their own terms.[1] Ancillary naval history consists of those studies that deal primarily with naval machines, men (including biography) manufacturing, and management. The members of this group either accept the core histories as given or ignore them altogether, and generally fail to address their findings to larger questions of policy and operations.[2]

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[1] The major core naval histories for the British and American navies are given in footnotes 16, 17, and 18.

[2] Examples of the technical (studies of warship design) and economic and administrative (U.S. Navy official histories of naval shipbuilding, administration, and logistics) elements of this genre should be

Cognate naval history stands apart from the first two. It consists of works that are concerned with navies in the past, but written mainly from the standpoint of fields distinct from naval history, such as political,[3] diplomatic,[4] economic,[5] social,[6] cultural,[7] intellectual,[8] technical,[9] maritime,[10] or Braudelian 'total' history;[11] or even different disciplines, such as political science[12] or sociology;[13] or interdisciplinary specializations such as international security[14] or strategic studies.[15] The main focus of this cognate naval history is not naval affairs as such, but the roles played by navies in domestic and international politics, maritime

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well known to most readers, and require no listing [references for the economic and administrative items can be found in Robert Greenhalgh Albion, comp., *Naval & Maritime History: An Annotated Bibliography*. 4th edition, revised and expanded. (Mystic, Conn.: Mystic Seaport for the Munson Institute of American Maritime History, 1972) and (Newton Abbott: David and Charles, 1973), pp. 54-8, 220-2, and in Benjamin W. Labaree, comp., *A Supplement 1971 -1986 to Robert G. Albion's Naval & Maritime History: An Annotated Bibliography* (Mystic, Conn.: Mystic Seaport for the Munson Institute of American Maritime Studies, 1988)]. There are no studies devoted exclusively to naval finance that can be considered ancillary naval history.

[3] For example, see Bernard Semmel, *Liberalism and Naval Strategy: Ideology, Interest, and Sea Power during the Pax Britannica* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1986).

[4] For example, see William Reynolds Braisted, *The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958) and *The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971).

[5] For example, see Sidney Pollard and Paul Robertson, *The British Shipbuilding Industry, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979). For examples of the economic history sub fields of business and financial history, see Hugh B. Peebles, *Warshipbuilding on the Clyde: Naval Orders and the Prosperity of the Clyde Shipbuilding Industry, 1889-1939* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1987), and Philip Pugh, *The Cost of Seapower: The Influence of Money on Naval Affairs from 1815 to the Present Day* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1986).

[6] For example, see Frederick S. Harrod, *Manning the New Navy: The Development of a Modern Naval Enlisted Force, 1899-1940* (Westport: Greenwood, 1978).

[7] For example, see Michael Vlahos, *The Blue Sword: The Naval War College and the American Mission, 1919-1941* (Newport: Naval War College Press, 1980).

[8] For example, see D. M. Schurman, *The Education of a Navy: The Development of British Naval Strategic Thought, 1867-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

[9] For example, see Willem Hackmann, *Seek and Strike: Sonar, anti-submarine warfare and the Royal Navy, 1914-54* (London: HMSO, 1984).

[10] For example, see Clark G. Reynolds, *Command of the Sea: The History and Strategy of Maritime Empires* (New York: William Morrow, 1974).

[11] No example exists for the twentieth century, but see Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 vols (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); see especially ii: conclusions.

[12] For example, see George Modelski and William R. Thompson, *Seapower in Global Politics, 1494-1993* (London: Macmillan, 1988).

[13] For example, see Christopher Dandeker, "Bureaucracy Planning and War: The Royal Navy, 1880 to 1918," *Armed Forces and Society*, 11(Fall 1984).

[14] For example, see Steven E. Miller and Stephen Van Evera, eds, *Naval Strategy and National Security* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

[15] For example, see John B. Hattendorf and Robert S. Jordan, eds, *Maritime Strategy and the Balance of Power: Britain and America in the Twentieth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).

affairs, or the general life of a maritime state or region; or navies as exemplars of certain economic, social, cultural, technical, political, or strategic phenomena. Cognate naval history, while in large part dependent on the master plot provided by the core history, differs from ancillary naval history by engaging the large questions and employing the methodologies characteristic of each of their respective fields.

Naval history thus embraces a wide and disparate range of activity. Core naval history, by its focus on policy and operations and exclusion of their institutional context, closely resembles classical or mainstream military history, of which it is often considered to be a sub-field. Ancillary naval history is largely the preserve of antiquarianism or otherwise ahistorical hyper-specialization. And cognate naval history is simply the name given to various enterprises that involve the study of naval affairs but which are actually variants of non-naval fields of history. For these reasons, there is no particular "how of doing" naval history—its ways and means may be those of virtually any branch of history and in some cases even non-history. Like Gertrude Stein's city of Oakland, there is, from the standpoint of practice, "no there there."

Beyond the common subject of navies in the past, what the varieties of naval history do share is at least rough agreement about what navies were meant to do or did. Naval planning and performance are the stuff of core naval history, and confidence in the excellence of the established leading studies is high. This is particularly so in the case of the literature devoted to the twentieth century's two largest navies, which set the standard for the genre. The core naval histories of Britain from the 1880s to 1945, which consist of multi-volume works based on access to large quantities of official documents and providing comprehensive treatment, are widely considered to be authoritative.[16] The core history of the United States Navy for the same period, though less complete, is respected as essentially sound.[17] For the post-1945 era, credible core naval history is sparse, but the best work for this period, when allowances are made for the problem of

[16] Arthur J. Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power: A History of British Naval Policy in the Pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940); idem., *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow: The Royal Navy in the Fisher Era, 1904-1919*, 5 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1961-70); Stephen W. Roskill, *The War At Sea*, 3 vols in 4 (London: HMSO, 1954-61); and *idem.*, *Naval Policy Between the Wars*, (London: Collins, 1968-76) 2 volumes. For the only comparative twentieth century naval history based on serious archival research, see Paul G. Halpern, *The Mediterranean Situation 1908-1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971); *The Naval War in the Mediterranean 1914-1918* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), and *A Naval History of World War I* (Annapolis: Naval Institute, 1994). For the most recent one-volume general histories of British naval operations of the world wars, which do not offer fundamentally different interpretations than their multi-volume predecessors, see Richard Hough, *The Great War at Sea, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), and Corelli Barnett, *Engage the Enemy More Closely: The Royal Navy in the Second World War* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991).

[17] Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II*, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1947-62) 15 volumes.

lack of access to important classified sources, equals and in important respects surpasses the quality of its pre-nuclear era counterparts.[18]

The core histories of the British and American navies, in short, are widely regarded as being, if not definitive, close to it. And because this happy condition was achieved without recourse to systematic examination of technical, personnel, economic, administrative, or financial matters, it has seemed as if the commitment of efforts in those directions would result in little except detail improvement. The negative effect of this impression has in turn been exacerbated by the fact that the extraction of meaningful conclusions about matters related to machines, men, manufacturing, management, and money require a great deal of specialized knowledge and significant amounts of technical skill. The marginality of ancillary naval history can thus be attributed in large part to a combination of small demand and the difficulty of supply.

But the finality of the core accounts can be questioned on three grounds. In the first place, in spite of the skill, diligence, and intelligence of their authors, the scope of inquiry and the volume of available archival materials were too great to allow detailed research into all matters of importance. Secondly, at the time that they were written, a large number of documents, including major collections of private papers, were for a variety of reasons unknown or otherwise unavailable. And thirdly, the creators of the core naval histories deployed the rhetoric and methods of traditional political, diplomatic, and military history, which limited their perspectives and precluded the application of new and powerful techniques—such as systematic quantitative analysis or interest group behavior studies—that had been developed in other areas of history. In short, that which could be examined was so vast as to preclude careful measurement by a single scholar in a reasonable length of time, the dossier was incomplete, and the manner of investigation relatively unsophisticated.[19]

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[18]   Eric J. Grove, *Vanguard to Trident: British Naval Policy Since World War II* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1987). Grove's monograph, indeed, to a far greater extent than its Royal Navy core history predecessors, takes account of technical, economic, administrative, and financial factors. This contributes strongly to its success, whose nature is such that Grove's work may be to a certain degree exempt from the kind of wholesale reevaluation being recommended for the core naval histories of the pre-1945 period. The high standards of analysis and research set by Grove's volume are not, unfortunately, matched by Michael T. Isenberg's *Shield of the Republic: The United States Navy in an Era of Cold War and Violent Peace, 1945-1962* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

[19]   For a critique of some of the methodological practices that produced the core history of the Royal Navy in the early twentieth century, see Jon Tetsuro Sumida, "Sir John Fisher and the *Dreadnought*: The Sources of Naval Mythology," *Journal of Military History*, 59 (October 1995). For broader discussion of the important methodological issues at stake, see Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965; first published, 1931). For the new techniques in political history developed between the World Wars that might have informed, if not been applied to, the study of the British and American navies, see Lewis Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, second ed. (London: Macmillan, 1957; first published 1929), and *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, second ed. (London: Macmillan, 1961; first published, 1930); and especially Eckart Kehr, *Battleship Building and Party Politics in Germany, 1894-1901*, Pauline R. and Eugene N. Anderson, trans. (Chicago:

Such general criticism aside, two recent developments have challenged the integrity of the core naval histories in fundamental ways. In the first place, a number of new monographs that deploy novel analytical techniques based on the use of a wide range of previously unexploited sources have discredited important sections of the core history of the pre-1945 Royal Navy.[20] And secondly, a complex model of institutional function tailored to describe the decision-making processes of the United States Navy in the nuclear era, calls into question to many of the basic assumptions underlying virtually all historical writing about naval policy-making from 1945 through the 1980s.[21] Much of the latter work, indeed, is applicable to the first half of the twentieth century and to the navy of Britain, neatly complementing the new model monographs by in effect codifying the methodological agenda implicit in their choice of subjects and presentation of argument.

The new model monographs employ, and the decision-making process analysis approach calls for, the integrated examination of technical, personnel, economic, administrative, and financial factors in order to reinterpret the course of policy-making and its consequences in operations. The adjustments of portions of the main narrative structure of the pre-1945 period, which amount to radical alteration and not mere modification, take the form of either direct changes in the existing record or additions to the record that put what was already known into a different perspective. In effect, this work violates the boundaries of the established core/ancillary division of labor by weaving together subject materials from both categories to renovate the core. Integration is facilitated by the exploitation of large quantities of previously unavailable or unexploited evidence and the deployment of new analytical approaches.

University of Chicago Press, 1973; first published 1930).

[20] John Robert Ferris, *Men, Money, and Diplomacy: The Evolution of British Strategic Policy, 1919-26* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); G. A. H. Gordon, *British Seapower and Procurement Between the Wars: A Reappraisal of Rearmament* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1988); Nicholas A. Lambert, "The Influence of the Submarine upon Naval Strategy, 1898-1914," unpublished Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1992; idem., "Admiral Sir John Fisher and the Concept of Flotilla Defence, 1904-1909," *Journal of Military History*, 59 (October 1995); idem., "British Naval Policy, 1913-14: Financial Limitation and Strategic Revolution," *Journal of Modern History* (forthcoming); Jon Tetsuro Sumida, *In Defence of Naval Supremacy: Finance, Technology and British Naval Policy, 1889-1914* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989; paperback edition, 1993); idem., "British Naval Administration and Policy in the Age of Fisher," *Journal of Military History*, 54 (January 1990); idem., "'The Best Laid Plans': The Development of British Battle Fleet Tactics, 1919-1942," *International History Review*, 14 (November 1992); idem., "British Naval Operational Logistics, 1914-1918," *Journal of Military History*, 57 (July 1993); idem., "Forging the Trident: British Naval Industrial Logistics, 1914-1918," in John A. Lynn, *Feeding Mars: Logistics in Western Warfare from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Boulder: Westview, 1993); and idem., "The Quest for Reach: The Development of Long Range Gunnery in the Royal Navy, 1901-1912," in Lt. Col. Stephen D. Chiabotti, ed., *Tooling for War: Military Transformation in the Industrial Age* (United States Air Force, forthcoming 1995).

[21] David Alan Rosenberg, "Process: The Realities of Formulating Modern Naval Strategy," in James Goldrick and John B. Hattendorf, eds, *Mahan is Not Enough: The Proceedings of a Conference on the Works of Sir Julian Corbett and Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond* (Newport: Naval War College Press, 1993).

There are reasons why factors related to machines, men, manufacturing, management, and money play so important a role in the making of works that pose fundamental challenges to the existing master plot. The existing core naval history placed these subjects in conceptual "black boxes" whose outputs were held to be secondary to primary concerns defined by matters that were considered to be more directly related to policy and operations. The internal dynamics of these black boxes, moreover, were implicitly dismissed as being of even lesser significance. What the new model monographs have done by one means or another is to show that the outputs were not what have been supposed. They have also indicated that the processes that were putatively contained by the black boxes—and therefore held to be separate—were not only connected to each other at many points, but indeed, by the very nature of their interactions, affected the making of policy and operations to such a degree as to count as a kind of output as well.

Much of the conviction of the new model scholarship is to be found only in their presentation of the particulars of their specific subjects. Nevertheless a good deal of what has just been explained may be illustrated by a broad comparison of aspects of the core literature with those of the new model monographs. Speaking very generally, the core histories oversimplify, and thereby obscure, the influence of technical, personnel, economic, administrative, and financial matters to extreme degrees. For example, the basic structure of fleets and functions of its constituents are generally considered to be fixed. The character and training of personnel are rarely considered, with emphasis on the human factor most often addressed only with regard to the personalities of top commanders. Production capacity is assumed to be available and the relationship of naval building to the rest of a nation's armaments manufacturing effort a matter of little interest. Bureaucracy is usually viewed as a given, and even when assigned valence it most often takes the negative form of being no more than an impediment to efficiency. And financial support is similarly taken as a constant, and when taken into account at all, only as a restrictive factor.

The handling of these matters by the new model monographs is much more complex and open to considerably wider variation. The structure of fleets and the functions of warships are treated as the hotly controversial questions that they often were, and the myriad technical, human, economic, administrative, and financial considerations that affected the strategic, tactical, and logistical discussion given a much greater measure of their due.

The particular practical experiences of officers in dealing with complicated and changing technology within the contexts of a difficult physical environment—namely the sea—and a complex institutional setting, have been found to have had a powerful influence on decision-making. The distribution of limited manufacturing assets between competing armed services and the civilian economy in wartime is considered to have been a centrally important strategic

issue, and also an extremely difficult problem of politics and administration. The careful scrutiny of bureaucratic organization, procedures, and cognizance have revealed previously unknown and substantive connections between the work of administration on the one hand, and policy and strategy on the other, whose effects were both enabling or disabling depending on circumstances. And finally, the examination of the specific terms of naval finance has clearly established that changes in the availability of money and shifts in its distribution among major spending categories had a major impact on the direction of naval policy in peacetime.

In the course of placing such issues on the table as significant factors influencing policy and—through the function or malfunction of machines, men, administration, and organization in war—operations, the new model monographs and decision-making process analysis approach has raised questions about other important matters which have previously been relegated to the sidelines or ignored altogether. These include naval officer education, training, promotion paths, and formation of interest groups based on weapons specialization, service association, or social background; the professional, as opposed to strictly social, experience of the naval rank and file, especially that of the technically skilled ratings; the nature of the naval labor market, that is, the effect of supply and demand on the quality and quantity of the naval work force; considerations affecting reserves and preparations for the wartime expansion of naval manpower; naval logistics, both industrial and operational; fleet training; naval intelligence in general, and naval industrial intelligence in particular; even the development of naval tactics; and last but not least, interservice rivalry.

The new model monographs and decision-making process analysis approach, in short, have indicated that the understanding of navies as complex human organizations that exist in relation to and even in competition with other such bodies within the same national structure, should be a prerequisite to the study of policy and operations. By opening up the black boxes of naval technology, personnel, economics, administration, and finance, its practitioners have in effect revealed the inadequacy of viewing a navy itself as a larger black box—that is, as little more than a nautical instrument of force of greater or lesser size and efficiency. Navies, they have suggested, might instead be better understood as institutions whose manifold dimension, variations in major characteristics, and potential for radical reformation need to be taken into consideration when investigating the conscious or even unconscious (that is, irrational psychological or cultural) motives underlying the behavior of naval decision-makers. Equally, appreciation of these same characteristics—that is, complexity, variety, and susceptibility to change—ought to inform evaluations of civil-naval relations, including naval legislative politics, the propagandization of the electorate, or the build-up of the military-industrial complex.

As in the case of those advances in science that have often resulted in fundamental changes in general outlook, the propositions put forward by the new model monographs are based on empirical research that in both qualitative and quantitative terms represent a considerable advance over what has previously been accepted as sufficient. In part this has simply been the result of the great influx of government documents and private collections of papers into archives during the twenty-plus years since the publication of the core histories, which provided much additional historical fodder for those that came afterward. In addition, however, the authors of the new model histories examined sources that dealt with technical, personnel, economic, administrative, and financial matters, which had been largely overlooked and which existed in quantity. Their studies also utilized basic engineering and accounting analytical techniques to make sense of substantial masses of technical and financial papers, producing new data sets that could be used to enhance the study of naval policy formulation.[22] The effects of this work have been both to alter perspectives and reveal a plethora of detail that had previously been obscured, which has provided much of the evidentiary foundation for the challenges thus far to sections of the core histories.

The generation of new points of view and achievement of clearer resolution has raised questions about the historical methodology that created the core histories as well as about the integrity of their narratives. This is because the new findings about finance and technology, when combined with the careful consideration of other evidence, have indicated that the internal communications of the government within and between departments cannot be taken at face value as was done to a very great extent in the core histories. This has three serious implications. In the first place, it means that even supposedly confidential and authoritative policy documents must be subjected to rigorous scrutiny and criticism. In the second place, in the absence of trustworthy and clear statements, proximate estimates of the decision-making process and its outcomes may have to be inferred or synthesized from inexplicit materials, such as financial statements or analysis of the technical characteristics of major weapons, using specialized analytical techniques. And thirdly, it may in fact be impossible to construct even inexact descriptions of what the decision-making process and its outcomes were because of the shortcomings of the sources, leaving the presentation of likely alternatives as the best that can be accomplished.[23]

Besides calling into question the basic narrative integrity of the core naval histories of the British and American navies, and the methodology that produced

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[22] This can be called "consilience of induction," a phrase coined by the nineteenth century philosopher of science William Whewell to describe the practice of coordinating findings from a number of independent data sets to reach conclusions about a particular historical pattern, for which see Stephen Jay Gould, *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), p. 282.

[23] *Ibid.*

it, the new model monographs and decision-making process analysis approach make it possible to broaden and sophisticate the study of navies as complex organizations. Three areas seem likely to become important focal points of inquiry: the social and cultural context of service and civilian naval decision-making, the role of contingency in the shaping of the course of naval affairs, and the relationship of the history of navies to general history.

Over the past three decades, several historians of twentieth century naval affairs have maintained that the socio-cultural characteristics of naval officers as a group have heavily influenced and even determined the course of naval policy-making. The naval history literature had for all intents and purposes not taken account of this factor, and the general proposition that it was an issue of considerable significance is a worthy one. Unfortunately, the exaggeration of claims, the dependence upon anecdote rather than the deployment of systematic argument, and inadequate or faulty evidence has compromised much of the value of this work, and thus restricted its influence.[24] On the other hand, the proliferation of well founded and conceptually advanced writing on navies as institutions will provide the basis for more sensible analyses of the social and cultural context of naval officer behavior, and that of politicians and bureaucrats as well. This should establish socio-cultural analysis as a much larger and more important form of naval history than is currently the case.

A detailed understanding of the organization of navies and the multiple and interlocking processes that constitute their internal dynamics and relationships to other departments of state and the political system in general, may also make it possible to consider the operation of chance to a far greater extent than has been done in the past. This question has two major aspects. In the first place, such an approach should reveal the extent to which certain kinds of decision-making at the highest level were exposed to disruption by happenings at lower levels whose outcomes were unpredictable. In effect, this would amount to the application of Clausewitz's concept of friction to non-combatant activity, usefully updated perhaps by contributions from recent work in chaos and complexity theory.[25] In the second place, recognition that crucial decisions could depend upon chance must raise the question of the viability of alternative major outcomes.[26] This would mitigate the tendency towards determinism, which would, among other things, perhaps temper the confidence of those engaged in historically based prediction for policy purposes.

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[24] For example, see Robert O'Connell, *Sacred Vessels: The Cult of the Battleship and the Rise of the U.S. Navy* (Boulder: Westview, 1991).

[25] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), book one, chapter seven; James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* (New York: Viking, 1987); M. Mitchell Waldrop, *Complexity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992); and Donald N. McCloskey, "History, Differential Equations, and the Problem of Narration," *History Theory*, 30 (1991).

[26] For a provocative exploration of this theme, see Gould, *Wonderful Life*.

The point of considering alternative outcomes, it needs to be said, is not to indulge in the treacherous practice of "what if" history, but rather to gain a greater appreciation of the extent to which naval policy makers were confronted by a difficult range of choices. Current standard histories typically judge policy or operational outcomes as good or bad, accordingly assign praise or blame to those held responsible, and sometimes attempt to draw lessons. But if events in certain instances could possibly or even probably have turned out differently than they did, decision-makers of the day who in hindsight selected the wrong options may be, if not forgiven, at least better understood, and the temptation to moralize resisted. And improved understanding and judgmental restraint in this area is important, because it may serve as the basis for an assessment of twentieth century naval policy making as a human organizational activity of not merely great difficulty, but in its time one of unique formidability. This proposition bears directly on the third category of analytical focus, a new perspective on the relation of naval to general history.

From the late nineteenth through the mid twentieth century, the leaders of major navies were confronted by technical, personnel, economic, administrative, and financial problems that were arguably of greater scale, difficulty, and complexity than that facing the executives of any other department of state or private corporation. Rapid technological change resulted in the swift depreciation of capital, whose periodic replacement by novel and usually larger, more complicated, and costlier equipment almost invariably required retraining and upgrading of the work force, improvements in productive capacity, the extension of bureaucracy, and increased expenditure. And higher spending, in particular, over time was bound to cause serious political complications. It should not, therefore, be surprising that the twentieth century is littered with naval errors of prediction with regard to choice of equipment, warship types, force structure, doctrine, tactics, and strategy given the hostile characteristics of the terrain that had to be negotiated.

In the later twentieth century, the problems that had formerly been the exclusive property of navies became more widely distributed as armies mechanized, air forces expanded and improved, and businesses discovered that timely responses to increasingly rapid changes in technology were essential for success. Thus the experience of navies, in light of more recent history, may take on a different appearance. Naval leaders as a group have not infrequently been depicted as technologically conservative and tradition-bound, and as such constituting reactionary subcultures isolated from surrounding progressive industrial society. The present brief survey has attempted to suggest the utility of following a different analytical tack—namely, that navies engaged problems of a kind that would not confront other major organizations until much later, and that their record of occasional predictive failure should not obscure the fact that

they carried burdens and developed solutions that made them precursors of, and perhaps models for, post-industrial institutional development.

The alterations of master plot, changes in method, extension of the data base, reconceptualization of the subject, and suggested agenda for additional work described in this paper amount to more than revisionism. The phenomenon being depicted is not mere improvement or development of a field, but a reordering of its basic components to such a degree that its fundamental nature is transformed. Thomas Kuhn, in his famous book on the structure of scientific revolutions, called such an event a "paradigm shift."[27] For Kuhn, the concept of a paradigm had multiple aspects, which allowed manifold applications, but essentially it meant a sense of problem-solving program and method that was the common intellectual property of an entire field. A paradigm, in other words, defined identity.

Kuhn's model may be applied usefully to the discussion of the present and future condition of twentieth naval history as a serious scholarly undertaking. In the case of the existing paradigm for naval history, the doing of it involves the study of navies in the past without much quibbling over questions of what purpose or which procedure. Naval history as such is thus an activity defined by subject rather than method. Such looseness has had its advantages, for it has allowed scholars from different historical fields and even different disciplines altogether to participate in an occupation that might otherwise have had many fewer practitioners. There are, however, serious drawbacks. While eclecticism has enlarged and enriched the field, it has also perforce resulted in a lack of focus and uncertain standards. There is little discussion—let alone agreement—about what major questions ought to be priority targets of investigation, and what methods might or might not be deployed or developed to address them. And in their absence, important subjects have been mishandled in a variety of ways.

The disparate and uneven quality of the twentieth century naval historical paradigm, moreover, has been growing. With core naval history presumed to be settled, and ancillary naval history dismissed and thus neutralized as a major influence, cognate naval history has become by apparent default the only area of dynamism and growth. This has had two consequences. First, it has reinforced the tendency to make the study of naval affairs a sub–department of many other fields or disciplines, increasing the difficulty of conceiving of naval history as an intellectually coherent activity on its own. And second, in the absence of a sound core naval history, the development of much cognate naval history has been limited or even compromised by insufficient or faulty information and analysis about basic things.

In addition to the propensity to disintegrate because of the action of internally generated centrifugal forces, the existing twentieth century naval historical

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[27] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Second Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970; first published 1962).

paradigm has been subjected to strong external pressure via the already described assaults by the new model monographs on the core naval history. These attacks, at one level, have served a purely destructive purpose by overturning important sections of the master plot. In this sense, the new model monographs have corresponded to Kuhn's anomalies—that is, experiments that produce results inconsistent with what might be expected if the existing scientific paradigm was sound. The multiplication of anomalies, Kuhn maintained, caused crises that were only resolvable by the adoption of a new paradigm that convincingly accounted for all or almost all recognized phenomena. The possibility of such a paradigm shift in naval history has been at least indicated by the amount of naval historical anomaly produced thus far.

At a second level, however, the new model monographs and the decision-making process analysis approach have gone beyond the generation of anomalies by providing the groundwork for a basic rearrangement of the present structure of what is now called twentieth century naval history. In the new structure, core and aspects of ancillary naval history are to be integrated in order to achieve a fundamental reconstruction of the former, which in turn should provide sounder foundations for cognate naval history. The renovation of core naval history will be no mean task. The problems to be solved—such as the influence of finance on policy, or industrial logistics on strategy—are important, and the methodological instruments necessary to accomplish the solutions— such as statistical or technical analysis—are in many cases difficult to manipulate. It is an undertaking that cannot be accomplished by a single scholar or even a single generation of scholars. It is, in short, work that is properly the responsibility of an autonomous field.

Such a field would not supplant what has been called twentieth century naval history in its entirety, but take its place within a larger framework that would. For heuristic purposes, the latter might be called 'the historical study of twentieth century naval affairs,' while the former would assume the name 'twentieth century naval history.' Twentieth century naval history would consist of a reformed core supported by ancillary naval history as before. The historical study of twentieth century naval affairs would constitute an activity that included naval history on the one hand, and the various forms of cognate naval history viewed as variants of other historical fields or disciplines on the other. Though naval history would be privileged in this arrangement by virtue of the fact that it was primarily responsible for the condition of the master plot, upon which cognate naval history is necessarily heavily dependent, this would not preclude the exertion of strong influence on naval history by cognate history contingent upon circumstances.

Kuhnian paradigm shift as applied to the transformation of what was formerly called twentieth century naval history can now be described. Fundamentally, it is about the emergence of a coherent field of twentieth century naval history

separate from what had been called cognate naval history, with its own distinct problem-solving program and methodology, but still related to cognate naval history under what might be called the 'grand field' title of the historical study of twentieth century naval affairs. The main outcome of such changes should be scholarly study of naval history that is much more dynamic, disciplined, and directed towards engagement with important issues that would otherwise have been ignored. The new naval history, because of the wide disparity between armies and navies with respect to environment and technology, will differ from the 'new' social, economic, cultural, etc. military history and even the 'new, new military history' that attempts to synthesize the new contextual military and 'old' operational military history.[28] And because of its greater discipline, depth, and sophistication, its proneness to misappropriation by social scientists of whatever stripe for the purposes of extravagant theorizing or unrestrained prognostication should be reduced.

Large gaps in the printed record limit the applicability of many of the new model techniques of twentieth century naval history to previous times. Much of what has been described nevertheless might well be applied with profit to earlier periods. Michael Oppenheim, the great historian of naval administration as it was practiced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, investigated his subject in ways that made him very much a student of pre-industrial machines, men, manufacturing, management, and money. It is thus significant, perhaps, that in 1909 he argued that naval administration was

> the somewhat ugly scaffolding without which the building of Naval History is impossible, and the understanding of it still less possible. That is to say that, in the past, other things being equal or nearly so, campaigns were won in the dockyards and administrative departments rather than by the Admirals.[29]

It may be appropriate, therefore, to reason by way of analogy— allowing for the differences in the degree of mechanization, and the slower pace of technical progress—and suggest that the practice of naval history for at least the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries may be subject to some of the same sort of alterations that have been described for that of the industrial period.[30]

[28] For a recent exploration of aspects of the new military history, see "Proceedings of the Symposium on 'The History of War as Part of General History'" at the Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton, New Jersey," *Journal of Military History*, 57 [special issue] (October 1993). For the "new, new military history," see John Childs in *The Nine Years' War and the British Army 1688-1697: The Operations in the Low Countries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp.2-3.

[29] Michael Oppenheim to Sir John Fisher, 20 January 1909, quoted in Sumida, "British Naval Administration and Policy in the Age of Fisher," p. 26.

[30] For examples of works that have already proceeded along these lines, see Daniel A. Baugh, *British Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), Jan Glete, *Navies and Nations: Warships, Navies and State Building in Europe and America, 1500-1860,* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1993) 2 volumes, and N. A. M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1986).

How quickly changes will come is impossible to predict, but the prospects for rapid advance are not fair. There are few historians of naval affairs of any kind to start with, and fewer still who are likely to pursue the course of scholarship just presented. Moreover, assistant professorships for historians of all description are hard to come by, and this is particularly so for those whose subjects involve armed forces; a significant increase in the number of new academics committed to the historical study of navies is thus highly unlikely, and this constraint at the entry level is to be especially regretted because the development of novel ideas and methods suit the temperament and energy of the young. And finally, it needs to be said that the new model naval history requires the learning of specialized skills and the investment of relatively large amounts of labor in proportion to the output of publishable work, which must further tend to the discouragement of would-be practitioners.

Doing naval history as it should be done, in conclusion, requires the overcoming of great obstacles, and in this sense it may resemble the actual task of maintaining and deploying a large and effective fleet. This paper's propositions with regard to an incipient transformation of program and method may thus serve as no more than a distant beacon. The will to change and confidence in its benefits, upon which most future action will depend, must come from another source. This was described by Kuhn, when he wrote that the person "who embraces a new paradigm at an early stage must often do so in defiance of the evidence provided by problem-solving." That individual, he maintained, must believe that the new paradigm will succeed with the many large problems that confront it, knowing only that the older paradigm has failed with a few." "A decision of that kind," Kuhn observed, "can only be made on faith."[31]

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[31] Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, chapter 12.

Chapter 3

Navies, Politics, and Political Science

Robert Jervis

I t is the dream—and the nightmare—of a scholar to outline the research agenda for a field about of which he knows little. Political science did not separate from history so very many years ago and scholars in the two fields study many of the same phenomena and read many of each other's works. Nevertheless, our separation is deep enough so that we sometimes talk in different languages.

How we proceed depends in large part on exactly what questions we are trying to answer (although of course the reciprocal also is true—the approaches we use influence the questions we see as interesting and important, sometimes unproductively, as in the law of the instrument, but often productively). We will never have one theory of naval history, let alone one theory of history. A student of the role of navies in international conflict, for example, will use different concepts, examine different data, and employ different methodologies than the person who wants to know how navies influenced and were influenced by conceptions of gender.

The existence of a field of inquiry like naval history implies two things. First, the area is distinct enough from others so that it can be studied in *relative* isolation. Of course this does not mean that it is totally uninfluenced by what happens elsewhere, but only that we are not doing a terrible injustice to the world we want to understand by the boundaries we draw, which tell us what we are not going to examine. There is something of a paradox here in that we need to be able to isolate the field of naval history on order to study it and yet part of what makes the field so interesting is the links it has to many other areas—*e.g.*, foreign policy, organizational theory, the uses of technology. Boundaries include as well as exclude, and the second criteria for a field of study is that the factors and events inside it are closely related to each other and to the phenomena we seek to understand. There is then some coherence both in the world we are trying to explain and in the fields of study we have constructed. For Sumida and Rosenberg, what makes naval history both coherent and distinctive is that navies are organizations which touch on, integrate, and embody very different tasks and elements.[1] In too many previous investigations, the topics of finance,

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[1] See the essay by Jon Sumida and David Rosenberg in this volume.

manufacturing, and technology have been treated as peripheral if not as outside the boundaries. But they are central to navies as organizations and so must be the focus of naval historians.

Navies As Causes of Foreign Policy and Conflict

It may be useful to think of navies as causes and as effects even though the separation is simplified and somewhat misleading. Perhaps the first thing a student of international politics wants to know is what difference navies make—i.e., how alternative organizations, technologies, strategies, and tactics contribute to national power and patterns of international politics. Since we are not alone in being especially interested in inadvertent and unnecessary wars and the related question of how the attempts by a state to gain security can make others less secure despite the fact that this is not the state's intention (a phenomenon known as the security dilemma),[2] let us take this as the first example.

Because states have to rely on self-help in the anarchic international system, they must prepare for conflicts that might arise in the future. Thus, part of the motive for Germany's building a battle fleet in the early twentieth century was the fear that Germany eventually would come into conflict with Great Britain and that, absent a fleet, Britain could sever Germany's access to colonies and overseas trade. Britain, being an island and dependent on the seas, understandably if not entirely correctly viewed the German fleet as a luxury and, indeed, as in indication of hostile German intentions. To a significant extent, it was. But it was not entirely hypocritical of German leaders to see the fleet as necessary for self-defense: it would reduce German vulnerability to Great Britain during a war and, for this reason, reduce British leverage over Germany in peacetime. These were legitimate objectives that would have been pursued by even a *status quo* Germany. Nevertheless, the effect was to decrease British security. This meant that even if both states desired mutual security, their naval policies would have increased the frictions between them. To overstate the case, Germany could only be secure if it had a fleet large enough to break a British blockade; Britain could only be secure if its fleet could sweep all before it and keep the seas open for British trade. Under some geographical and technological conditions, these goals could be compatible. In the early twentieth century they were not.

I have argued elsewhere that if both sides adopted the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) during the Cold War, mutual security could have been gained more readily through deployment of SLBMs than by land-based missiles.[3] Because accurate ICBMs can be used to destroy the other side's similar

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[2] The literature is very large: much of it is discussed in Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 62-83.

[3] Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, 30 (January 1978), pp. 212-14.

weapons, MAD can be difficult to maintain, especially if the missiles have multiple warheads. If each side builds more ICBMs to make itself more secure, it will threaten the other side. This is not true for submarine-launched nuclear missiles. Not only are these relatively invulnerable, but they cannot readily be used to attack each other. Thus, an increase in the number of American SLBMS would not impinge on Soviet second-strike capability and, under the idealized assumption of mutual acceptance of MAD, what little military competition operated would not increase political frictions and the chance of war.

The other side of this coin is that many of those who criticized the U.S. Maritime Strategy in the 1980s did so on the grounds that it embodied the security dilemma.[4] That is, the forces and tactics called for would menace the Soviet Union even if that country did not have aggressive intentions because it placed a premium on striking first and called for actions which would have had the effect—and sometimes (but only sometimes)—the intent of crippling the USSR's retaliatory capability.

As the discussion of the Maritime Strategy illustrates, the security dilemma can operate at the level of tactics as well as strategy. That is, some technologies and tactics generate incentives to strike first. In such a situation fighting may occur even though neither side wants it: each knows that despite a mutual interest in staying at peace, attacking is much better than receiving the first blow.[5] Because ships are small in number and relatively vulnerable, I suspect that navies are more prone to destabilizing dynamics of this kind than are armies. While there are cases of isolated inadvertent exchanges between land units, these rarely spread very far. But ships not only carry more national prestige, they operate in fleets and the potential for undesired escalation is very great. Historically, the obvious example is the battle of Navarino, although I grant it would be better for my argument if I could readily provide a longer list.

It used to be believed that the Cuban Missile Crisis was a near-miss in that the unauthorized activities of the American navy could easily have set off a dangerous Soviet response. But on closer examination it appears that the navy was not only quite faithful to civilian instructions, but understanding the danger, took steps to minimize it.[6] It turns out, however, that the Cold War *does* give us a nice example of naval forces increasing the dangers of inadvertent war. The Soviet and American fleets were dangerously deployed during the October 1973

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[4] See, for example, John Mearsheimer, "A Strategic Misstep: The Maritime Strategy and Deterrence in Europe," *International Security*, 11(Fall 1986), pp. 3-57. Also, James D. Watkins, *et. al., The Maritime Strategy*, U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, Supplement, (January 1986).

[5] The general situation is well described by the Prisoner's Dilemma, which is closely related to the security dilemma. For a good discussion of how actors can cooperate in such a situation, see Kenneth Oye, ed., *Cooperation Under Anarchy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

[6] Scott Sagan, "Nuclear Alerts and Crisis Management," *International Security*, 9(Spring 1985), pp. 99-139; Joseph Bouchard, *Command in Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), chapter 4.

Middle East war. Each navy felt—probably correctly—that there were great incentives to strike first.[7] Thus it appears that war could have grown out of each fleet's attempts to protect itself. Furthermore, the civilian leaders, at least on the American side, were blissfully unaware of the significance of the naval deployments.[8]

This brings up two additional related reasons why navies may be especially prone to be destabilizing. First, because of technology and traditions, ship captains have a great deal of individual autonomy. I also suspect that they are more prone to ignore orders—after all, it was a naval hero who put the glass to his blind eye. Of course unauthorized actions may reduce rather than increase the dangers of inadvertent war: military leaders are often less bellicose than their civilian counterparts and more aware of the danger of events getting out of control.[9] But people on the spot are likely to feel great pressures to protect their military units even if doing so makes the world more dangerous. Second, as the 1973 example illustrates, civilian leaders are likely to know and understand even less about naval plans and behavior than about those of the other armed services. Outsiders find navies especially hard to comprehend and while they are likely to enjoy photogenic rides on ships, they rarely know what fleets do under everyday situations, let alone how they will operate in a crisis. Complementing this civilian ignorance is the fact that, at least in the post-war U.S., naval officers seem to pay less attention to politico-military issues than do their counterparts in other services. (This fact requires an explanation. One obvious component is the great stress placed on competence in commanding ships for naval promotion and the concomitant devaluation of time spent in Washington. But whether this can be explained by the inherent requirements of navies or whether it is more cultural is an open question. Comparisons to other countries and other periods of time would be useful.)

Of course countries rarely seek security or other goals unilaterally; alliances are an essential part of international politics. Here navies play a number of interesting roles which we need to know more about. First (although not necessarily most important), when navies work together the individuals involved develop transnational ties which can influence national policy. Each navy can become a lobby for the strengthening of the political connections with the other. Furthermore, naval officers in country A may conspire with their colleagues in country B to get the political leaders of their country to adopt policies that will serve both the national interest as they see it and the interest of their organization (of course these two are likely to be seen as consistent if not identical). Thus country A's admirals may put pressure on their government to increase the size

[7] Bouchard, *Command in Crisis*, chapter 6.

[8] Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982), p. 475.

[9] Richard Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

of their fleet by getting the admirals of country B to persuade B's leaders to request greater naval support from A. In other cases, the transnational ties may affect less visible behavior. Thus it seems that a significant amount of the military assistance that the U.S. provided to Great Britain in the Falklands-Malvinas War not only went through informal naval channels, but was not explicitly authorized by the civilian leaders.

On a broader political level, political relations can both influence and be influenced by perceived naval requirements, which in turn change with changing technologies, national goals, and international configurations. The need for naval bases can drive the state to seek either good relations with or the domination of countries which could menace those bases, even if those countries are of no intrinsic importance to the state. Of course the existence of good or bad relations with various countries is itself an important determinant of the need for naval forces, and this in turn influences both the kind of navy that is required and the bases that are available and must be sought.

Navies influence domestic politics—and indeed other aspects of domestic life—as well as foreign affairs. This topic is sufficiently large and far from my expertise that I only wish to note that it appears to be underappreciated and understudied. Since armies often stage coups it is impossible to overlook their political roles. But just because navies are offshore does not mean they are without influence, both direct and indirect. Not only are they potent instruments of violence, but they can create or undermine the legitimacy and influence of groups and ideologies within the country. Furthermore, they can lead and shape other institutions by the examples they set and the demands they make on the rest of society. In many eras, they are the largest, most complex, and most technically advanced organizations in their countries. Although determining their influence is not likely to be easy, it is never likely to be minor.

Causes of Naval Policy

Dean Acheson once remarked that his already low estimate of political science was lowered still more when he saw a study that treated him as a dependent variable. "At the very least," he said, "I thought I was an independent variable." But we are interested in what causes navies to develop the way they do as well as the influence of navies (and, as previously noted, the relations often are reciprocal). Somewhat artificially, we can divide naval policy into procurement, strategy, tactics and, although it is not quite on the same level and indeed influences the first three, propensity to innovate. These interact to produce naval capability. They in turn are influenced by the state's external environment, domestic politics, bureaucratic politics, and the autonomous beliefs and values of the decision-makers.[10] Technology and organizational culture are also crucial

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[10] This typology of causal factors is the classic—for international relations scholars—division into levels of analysis, first articulated by Kenneth Waltz in *Man, the State, and War* (New York: Columbia

and, to some extent, intervene between the causes I have listed and the aspects of naval policy we are trying to explain. We can summarize this scheme as follows:

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT		PROCUREMENT
DOMESTIC POLITICS	TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE	STRATEGY
		CAPABILITY
BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS	ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE	TACTICS
DECISION-MAKING		PROPENSITY TO INNOVATE
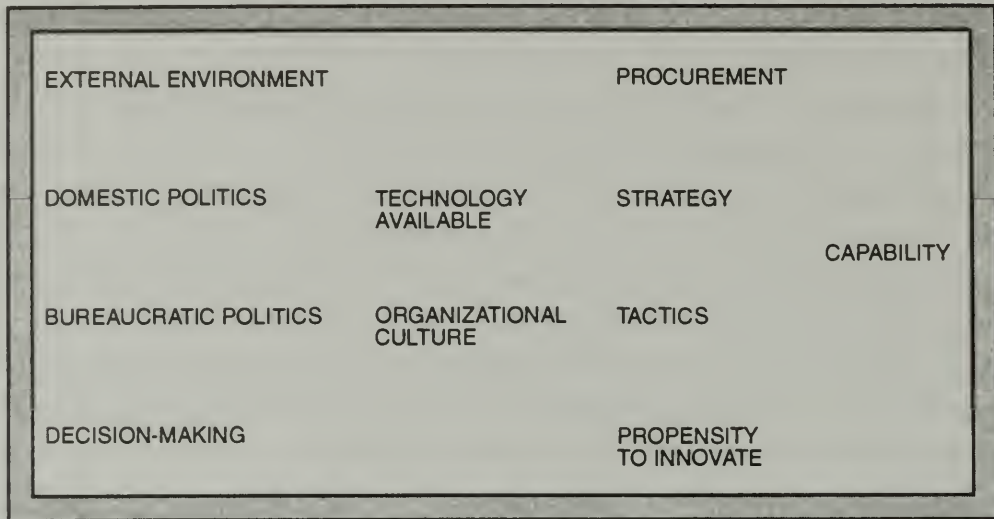
Although the diagram does not provide any answers, it does frame a number of questions about the connections that operate. Of course almost everything is connected to everything else, and in an earlier draft of this paper I drew in the arrows only to find that they filled the page. But a few connections are absent and others are weak. Earlier I talked about naval policy and foreign policy. The latter to some extent influences if not dictates the former, but only at the most general level. The development of tactics presumably is related to the identity of the adversary only to the extent that different potential adversaries have different kinds of navies. Some connections are important but indirect and obscure, however. Navies often choose among competing tactics, and to the extent that different naval leaders would choose differently, anything that affects the identity of the leaders can affect the tactics adopted. General foreign policy can certainly influence who is selected for top positions, and so the choice of tactics could be an unintended by-product of foreign policy disputes. Another indirect linkage is that a popular foreign policy could encourage military spending and produce a large pool of manpower for the navy. This, in turn, could make certain tactics attractive.

The role of domestic politics is also greater in some aspects of naval policy than others. In pre-World War I Germany, the growing middle class supported and benefitted from a large navy and in post-War America congressional districts with many naval bases had an interest in maintaining a large fleet. But we probably do not need to delve into these matters if we are focusing on the ways

University Press, 1959). Also see Arnold Wolfers, "The Actors in International Politics," in *Discord and Collaboration* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962), pp. 3-24. The division into four levels is taken from Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, chapter 1.

in which new technologies were adopted or the interaction of individuals of varying ethnicities and class backgrounds in the ship-borne societies.

Students of arms races—at least of certain methodological and ideological persuasions—see each state's military as responding to the other. In this model, the country and each of its armed services is vigilantly looking outward at the adversary, analyzing what others are doing, adapting its behavior to maximize the chances of winning the next war, and in general responding to external pressures and opportunities. Quite a different view sees countries as a whole, military organizations in general, and perhaps navies in particular as being guided not by the outside world but by internal impulses. To what extent, then, are navies, like many other bureaucracies, operating on auto-pilot? When and under what conditions do they follow their own impulses, cultures, and conceptions of interest with little regard for what other countries and other navies are doing? To what extent do navies know what their adversaries are doing and how they will fight? Is such information diligently sought, adequately processed, and accurately assessed? Or are views of the external world rationalizations more than rationales?[11]

It should be noted, however, that even if the sources of naval conduct are internal, there may be important external effects, which in turn feed back and affect the state's security and naval policy. Thus even if Wilhelmine Germany developed a strong navy in part to strengthen the regime domestically, this action changed the international environment and menaced Great Britain. The effect is especially pronounced because not only are states generally slow to see that others are being driven by domestic concerns, but they are prone to "worst case analysis" which justifies their assuming that the latter's arms will be directed against them no matter what its motives are.

Innovation

It is a commonplace that navies are even more hide-bound than most bureaucracies. Even if this characterization is correct, it may be a blessing for national policy, especially if other navies behave similarly. The country, and the world, might not be better off if military organizations were quicker to develop ingenious methods of destruction. But, assuming the characterization is true, we want to know what the reasons are. Is conservatism impelled by the requirements of building and running ships and fleets? Or is the explanation more sociological—the nature of the personnel recruited, the promotion system used, or the kind of close-knit society that almost inevitably develops among a group of people who interact mostly with each other?

If either of these determinisms operates, we would expect navies of one country to resemble navies of others, especially in their conservatism. This, in

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[11] For a good discussion, see Wesley Wark, *The Ultimate Enemy: British Intelligence and Nazi Germany, 1933-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

turn, would mean that there would be nothing particularly German about the German navy or American about the American navy. This would simplify our scholarship: to understand the navy we are studying, we would not have to delve deeply into the political or cultural characteristics of the society at large.

It seems likely that navies, as other organizations, are more prone to adopt innovations swiftly if they assist the organization in better carrying out a mission it already sees as central than if the innovation serves a mission that is new, different, and, especially, conflictive with established ones. Adopting a better airplane is relatively easy; adopting aircraft at all is not. Such developments require large and ramifying changes and call into question the ideas, machinery, and personal power hierarchies that previously dominated the organization. These barriers are common to all organizations; two further ones are potent within the military.

First, it is particularly difficult for them to test the environment by small-scale experiments because the true value of the proposed innovation can be known only through combat. Second, as Edward Katzenbach has stressed in his fine study of the cavalry's resistance to the introduction of tanks, for men to fight well they must have faith in their weapons and tactics.[12] Touting the new means and denigrating the old, it is not surprising that people will be slow to see the flaws in the systems on which they have been relying for their survival. But, on occasion, large innovations, somewhat akin to paradigm shifts in scholarship, do occur. The most obvious explanation for them is extreme external pressure: organizations only undergo radical changes when they have to. When the international environment is relatively calm, military organizations are more or less left on their own and can do what they please; when war becomes more probable, civilian leaders intervene and upset established routines.[13] But this view may underestimate the internal sources of military innovation. Organizational maintenance is not always the highest priority; officers do realize that they need to win the next war.[14] This debate has been conducted largely within the context of ground and air forces. Examining this question for navies, although not any more likely to yield definitive answers, should be valuable by explicating the links, or lack thereof, among the external environment, internal perspectives and interests, and naval behavior. It should help tell us the extent to which the navy is following its organizational imperatives and is acting in a world of its own.

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[12]   Edward Katzenbach, "The Horse Cavalry in the Twentieth Century: A Study on Policy Response," in Carl Friedrich and Seymour Harris, eds., *Public Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard Graduate School of Public Administration, 1958), pp. 120-50.

[13]   Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

[14]   Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca. Cornell University Press, 1991).

But we should not overlook the element of chance and accident in innovation.[15] Often a fundamental change is made possible by previous developments that were pursued for other reasons. Organizations produce an array of innovation candidates whose fates may be determined by how they coincide with essentially unrelated problems and opportunities. Thus the chances of adopting a newly-developed safety device will be increased if an accident occurs even if the device would not have prevented the accident. To take a naval example, SLBMs would not have been possible without nuclear-powered submarines. Yet the latter were not developed with the former in mind. Although this may reflect my own ignorance, it is far from clear to me that it would have been worthwhile for the U.S. to have developed nuclear submarines had not SLBMs been developed later; anti-submarine warfare efforts might have been better pursued with other instruments. If this line of argument is correct, then neither the external environment nor internally-generated impulses of the bureaucracy entirely determine what will happen. This may reduce the extent to which we can generalize, which would just show the importance of history and the limits of political science.

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[15] See Michael Cohen, James March, and Johan Olsen, "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17 (March 1972), pp. 1-25; James March and Johan Olsen, *Ambiguity and Choice in Organizations* (Bergen, Norway: Universitetsforlaget, 1976); for an excellent discussion and critique, see Charles Perrow, *Complex Organizations: A Critical Essay*, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986), pp. 131-54.

PART II
Domestic Politics

Chapter 4

Navies and Domestic Factors

Volker Berghahn

I f one tries to discover a dominant perspective that pervades military history as a genre, it is probably fair to say that most scholars stress the role armed forces play in the context of a particular country's external security. Armies, navies, and air forces exist and overwhelmingly tend to be justified, by contemporaries as well as retrospective historians, as defensive establishments against external enemies. This interpretation sounds particularly plausible to those who start from the assumption that to this day the international system is anarchic and ruled by the principle of cut-throat competition among the nation states that emerged from the Peace of Westphalia. In this Social Darwinist world, it is argued, some states will always be tempted, in the absence of a central policing authority, to move into perceived power vacuums around them. In this case armed forces are created and maintained for the purpose of external conquest. And they will be successful, if their neighbors cannot defend themselves and/or fail in maintaining a balance of power, often in alliance with others, against the presumed aggressor.[1]

This "primacy of foreign policy" perspective has been challenged many times by those who argue that a nation's foreign and security policy is much less, and certainly not exclusively, determined by external pressures. It could even be argued that during the 1960s and 1970s the balance of scholarly activity swung in the opposite direction when the advocates of the "primacy of domestic politics" approach began to gain ground. In the United States, this latter approach was most powerfully represented by the Williams School. While William A. Williams was concerned with the overall design of American foreign policy since the eighteenth century, the most heated debates arose over the question of the origins and propellants of the Cold War. Here it was the "revisionists" who, in a number of studies, put the case against those who had seen U.S. diplomacy and security policy during the Cold War period as a defensive response to Soviet

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[1] A now classic statement of this view of international politics can be found in Ludwig Dehio's book "Equilibrium or Hegemony" whose English translation appeared in 1963 under the less telling title *Precarious Balance*. But it can also be spotted in most books on international history and politics that espouse geopolitical and *realpolitische* approaches. L. Dehio, *Precarious Balance: Four Centuries of the European Power Struggle* (New York: Vintage, 1965).

expansionism and imperialism.[2] In the long-term this particular controversy has been moving toward a position that stresses the interaction of domestic and external factors. Moreover, its protagonists have focused on the tendency of decision-makers to overestimate foreign threats and to assume the worst case; they have introduced social-psychological factors and refused to see foreign policy-making as something that is predetermined by the unchanging "laws" of an anarchic international system. Indeed, they say it is only with the benefit of hindsight that the aggressiveness of another power turns out to have been less serious than had been assumed at the time.[3]

While this appears to be a more widely accepted view among experts of American foreign and security policy, the debate on German foreign policy has taken a different turn. Here the rise of the "primacy of domestic politics" school in the 1960s and 1970s did not end in an intermediate position. Prominent and influential analysts have revived Dehio's notions of power-politics and once again highlighted Germany's situation "in the middle of Europe."[4] This return to the positions of the 1950s is based on an unfortunate ignoring of research results and has blocked the kind of developments that have taken place with regard to the Cold War debate in the U.S. The overall thrust of this essay is therefore to appeal to the protagonists of the "primacy of foreign policy" to advance toward more sophisticated approaches that incorporate domestic factors. The appeal is by implication also directed at military and naval historians who tend to start from the above-mentioned Social Darwinist vision of the international system and whose tools of analysis have hence remained rather traditional.

The case for the importance of domestic factors can be made most plausibly for the land forces of the great powers in Europe prior to 1914; for it is often forgotten that armies have never been just instruments for waging external war. They were always also available for civil war; they could be moved against a foreign enemy, but tended to be no less well prepared to quell domestic unrest and revolutionary movements. Governments and professional military of the nineteenth century were acutely aware of this function of their land forces, and the experience of the 1848 Revolutions acted as a powerful incentive not to ignore it. While the military archives of European powers contain relevant material on this subject, the best documented case in point is probably that of

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[2] See, *e.g.*, W. Lippmann, *The Cold War* (New York: Harper, 1947); H. Feis, *From Trust to Terror* (New York: Norton, 1970); W.A. Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* 2nd edition. (New York: Dell, 1972); G. Kolko, *The Politics of War* (New York: Random House, 1972); Lloyd Gardner, *Architects of Illusion* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970).

[3] See, *e.g.*, J.L. Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); *idem., The Long Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[4] H.-U. Wehler, *The German Empire* (Leamington Spa: Berg Publ., 1985); K. Hildebrand, "Staatskunst oder Systemzwang," *Historische Zeitschrift*, 228 (1979), pp. 624ff.; D. Calleo, *The German Problem Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); M. Stürmer, *Das ruhelose Reich* (Berlin: Severin & Siedler, 1983); G. Schöllgen, *Escape into War?* (Oxford: Berg Publ., 1990).

the Prusso-German Army. In light of Germany's exposed geopolitical position in the heart of Europe, it is also the most telling case when we remember that Reich Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and his military advisers always claimed to be haunted by the "nightmare of hostile foreign coalitions" and for this reason had repeatedly argued for increased defense expenditure.[5] However, in the 1890s this argument largely disappeared from the arsenal of the professional officer corps and did so for a full quarter of a century. There were no increases in defense spending to deal with foreign threats and Germany's exposed position in the heart of Europe. It was only after twenty-five years of stagnation that sharp increases in Army expenditure were once more demanded and approved in 1912-13. How can this be explained? Could it be that domestic considerations even came to outweigh diplomatic ones?

In his memoirs, published in 1933, General Karl von Einem, the Prussian War Minister between 1903 and 1909, blamed the civilian government and the Reich Parliament for a policy of inaction that he now argued had had disastrous consequences for Germany's military power in World War I.[6] Einem had conveniently forgotten that it had been the Army itself that had adopted this policy after the last major Army bill of 1893. Indeed, around the turn of century he, at this time still a department head in the Prussian War Ministry, had railed at the "*rage de nombre*" that he believed motivated Alfred von Schlieffen, Chief of the General Staff.[7] Later, as War Minister, he let repeated opportunities slip by to increase the size of the Army. In 1905 he wrote for Schlieffen's benefit a long "Clarification of My Views on the Future Development of the Army" which he said had the support of both the Kaiser and the Chief of the Military Cabinet.[8] As Einem put it:

> Both from the point of view of the formation of new units and the establishment of new troops, the development of the Army can, at the present time, be regarded as being by and large complete. The question of whether the number of cadres is sufficient to meet the case of war can, in my view, on the whole be answered in the affirmative. This also applies to the further question of whether the number of soldiers is large enough to secure the adequate strength of the existing cadres as well as the training of sufficient recruits so that the required reserve and *Landwehr* units may be formed in the case of war.

In 1909, Einem was still arguing against the "people who never cease wanting to expand the Army." That this was also the position of his successor, General Josias von Heeringen, is evidenced by a letter he wrote to Reich Chancellor

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[5] V.R. Berghahn, *Imperial Germany, 1871-1914* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1994), pp.261ff.

[6] Karl von Einem, *Erinnerungen eines Soldaten* (Leipzig: F.F. Koehler, 1933), pp.59f.

[7] Quoted in Germany. Reichsarchiv. *Kriegsrüstung und Kriegswirtschaft* (Berlin: E.S. Mittler, 1930), vol. I, pp. 65f.

[8] Quoted in *Kriegsrüstung und Kriegswirtschaft*, vol. II, pp.90f.

Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg in 1910.[9] He confirmed that he had no plans to increase the size of the Army, although Germany's international situation did not look at all comfortable. In 1904 the Entente Cordiale had been formed between England and France. Three years later this arrangement had been extended to an Anglo-Russian accord. Since France was also allied to Russia, an alliance system that many Germans by then perceived as an "encirclement" was complete. So, if the "primacy of foreign policy" was really the all-motivating force, Heeringen might have done something to strengthen the Army. Instead he wrote to Bethmann: "I do not have to explain to Your Excellency the reasons for this [inaction] which, military considerations apart, belong to the realm of politics."[10]

The political considerations emerge from Einem's memorandum of 1905 in which had admitted to Schlieffen that there were "weaknesses and gaps" and in particular "a not inconsiderable shortage of officers."[11] This shortage could, of course, be overcome, but only at the cost of lowering "the standards regarding family background etc. of officer aspirants." If such a policy were adopted, however, "we can no longer prevent acceptance, on an increased scale, of democratic and other elements which are not suited to the officer class." Einem added that for the same reason it was dangerous to increase the intake of ordinary conscripts which would similarly "weaken the Army."

It is not too difficult to see what the Kaiser and his military advisors were worried about. They feared that a further expansion of the Army would undermine the homogeneity of the officer corps in which the percentage of aristocratic and devoutly conservative officers had already experienced a decline for lack of suitable candidates.[12] An influx of officers of bourgeois background was thought to create problems not in a foreign war, but in the eventuality of internal unrest. Could bourgeois officers, possibly from liberal families, be relied upon to give tough orders to shoot on demonstrators, strikers, or insurgents? Ordinary recruits caused similar concerns among the arch-conservative officer corps. In an age of rapid demographic change, industrialization, and urbanization a growing number of those who were drafted into the Army came from working-class background. Would these soldiers not refuse to obey orders in a civil war when asked to move against fellow-workers behind the barricades? Clearly, if in the hour of serious domestic crisis the Army could no longer be relied upon to defend the existing order, the monarchical system would be doomed. It was this nightmare that led Einem and his colleagues to pursue their peculiar armaments policy after the mid-1890s.

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[9]   Quoted in V.R. Berghahn, *Der Tirpitz-Plan* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1971), p. 269.

[10]   Quoted in Berghahn, *Der Tirpitz-Plan*, p. 270.

[11]   Quoted in *Kriegsrüstung und Kriegswirtschaft*, vol. II, pp. 90f.

[12]   M. Messerschmidt, *Militär und Politik in der Bismarckzeit und im Wilhelminischen Deutschland* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Bunchgeselleschaft, 1975).

The Prusso-German case may be particularly glaring; but it is safe to assume that similar considerations were also in the minds of Army leaders in other countries. At a time of growing working-class organization and radical talk about the impending "revolution" the function of armies in Europe was patently not just for external defense, but was equally directed against the 'internal enemy'. All officers, and the Prusso-German ones in particular, had their written instructions in their top-drawers, telling them what to do in the event of strikes and civil disturbance.[13] Their counterparts, especially in the monarchies of Europe, were similarly briefed on what to do in such cases.

At first glance, it seems more difficult to make a similar case about navies having a clearly recognizable domestic function. War ships are not suitable for fighting civil wars, except perhaps in marginal operations, such as the shelling of insurgent towns in coastal waters. The conclusion that naval historians have tended to draw from this is that naval armaments are the clearest and most unambiguous reflection of the "primacy of foreign policy." Ships are built because of a perceived need to acquire or to protect overseas possessions and to defend the country against an external aggressor. This is also how Admiral Alfred Tirpitz justified the stepping-up of ship-building in Germany from 1897,[14] and so did historians of the interwar years and of the post-1945 period. Walther Hubatsch was the prime protagonist of this position in the 1950s.[15] Jürgen Rohwer and others made this case in subsequent decades, mainly by conducting elaborate comparisons with the building programs of other European countries to which, they maintain, Tirpitz merely reacted defensively, demanding no more than a 'measure' of sea power to protect Germany's overseas commercial interests and small colonial empire.[16]

The problem with this position was that the German Navy files, fully accessible to research for the first time only since the 1960s, told a different story, even if looked at from the angle of the "primacy of foreign policy." There was, to begin with, the blunt memorandum that Tirpitz produced for the Kaiser in June 1897 in which he pinpointed Britain, the first sea power, as Germany's "most dangerous enemy" against whom any naval building ultimately had to be directed.[17] Subsequent work showed that Tirpitz wanted to build, until 1920 and in several carefully calculated smaller steps, some sixty capital ships to be concentrated in front of the Royal Navy's doorstep.[18] Should the British try to

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[13] W. Deist, "Die Armee in Staat und Gesellschaft, 1890-1914," in M. Stürmer, ed., *Das kaiserliche Deutschland* (Düsseldorf: Droste Athenäum, 1970), pp. 312-39.

[14] A. von Tirpitz, *Erinnerungen* (Leipzig: K.F. Koehler, 1929), pp. 79ff.

[15] See, *e.g.*, W. Hubatsch, *Die Ära Tirpitz* (Berlin: Musterschmidt Verlag, 1955).

[16] J. Rohwer, "Kriegsschiffbau und Flottengesetze um die Jahrhundertwende," in H. Schottelius and W. Deist, eds., *Marine und Marinepolitik, 1871-1914* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1973), pp. 211-35.

[17] Quoted in J. Steinberg, *Yesterday's Deterrent* (London: Macdonald, 1965), Appendix.

[18] See V.R. Berghahn, *Der Tirpitz-Plan*.

launch an attack against the Reich, this battle fleet, in line with accepted doctrine on relative strengths required in a naval engagement, was to have a "genuine chance of victory" in the North Sea. If, on the other hand, the Royal Navy did not start a war, the sheer size of the German battle-fleet was to be used by the Kaiser and his advisors as a power-political lever with which they expected to wring territorial concessions from the British at the negotiating table. At a time when old empires, like the Portuguese one, were crumbling and many people expected a "reordering of the world," the Kaiser wanted to be able to raise his voice and to bully other powers into making concessions.

Klaus Hildebrand was among those who in the 1970s drew attention to the radical character of Tirpitz's program.[19] This program amounted, he argued, to nothing less than a move to revolutionize the international system either by shifting the existing balance of power, so to speak, in one afternoon during the victorious battle against the Royal Navy in the North Sea or through insistent demands to be allocated sizeable colonial possessions. German naval and *Weltpolitik*, Hildebrand concluded, was "quite certainly" inspired by "revolutionary intentions." The Kaiser and his advisors wanted to "shake the global Pax Britannica" and to effect a new balance of power in the world. He also had no doubt that this design had disastrous consequences for Germany and the rest of the world. It triggered the Anglo-German arms race, once the British became aware of Germany's "revolutionary challenge," before the naval competition escalated into a general race on land that involved all the major powers of the European continent. The Tirpitz Plan thus became a key factor in the outbreak of World War I.

Hildebrand never investigated the question as to why the Kaiser and his advisors should, at the turn of the century, have promoted a naval armaments policy that was admittedly designed to overthrow the international status quo. There was, of course, an explanation, first put forward in the 1920s by the German historian Eckart Kehr, that might have merited further inquiry.[20] According to this view, the Imperial government decided to challenge the international distribution of power in order to avoid having to change the domestic status quo that had increasingly come under pressure from reformist forces that demanded a modernization and parliamentarization of the by then old-fashioned Prusso-German constitutional order of 1871. But instead of grappling with this view, Hildebrand in effect joined forces with another influential historian, Michael Stürmer.[21] The latter had rediscovered for some

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[19] K. Hildebrand, "Imperialismus, Wettrüsten und Kriegsausbruch," *Neue Politische Literatur*, 2 (1975), pp. 160-94; *ibid.*, 3 (1975), pp. 339-64.

[20] See E. Kehr, *Battleship Building and Party Politics in Germany* (Chicago, 1973); *idem.*, "Anglophobia and Weltpolitik," in Kehr, ed., *Economic Interest, Militarism, and Foreign Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

[21] M. Stürmer, "Deutscher Flottenbau und europäische Weltpolitik vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg," in

time the geopolitical arguments of the 1950s and "the deeply pessimistic power theory of Friedrich Meinecke, Ludwig Dehio, [and] Gerhard Ritter." Accordingly Stürmer had begun to publish books on Germany as "the land in the middle" and spoke of the country's difficult and exposed position in the heart as a tragic "*conditio Borussica*".

Above all, Stürmer began to polemicize against a "modern school of historiography that believes in the 'primacy of domestic politics' and presents it as a doctrine," lumping its advocates together with representatives of "Marxist and vulgar-Marxist theorems." This school, he asserted, "draws from the 'critical theory' of the Frankfurt School . . . the idea of a society optimized by social science [*einer sozialwissenschaftlich optimierten Gesellschaft*], with external relations that are fundamentally peaceful." Whoever takes such a view, Stürmer concluded, has little understanding for notions of power politics. He confronts "manifestations of power, hunger for power, and the disintegration of power speechlessly and without analytical tools. Hubris and nemesis cannot be found in the name index of this kind of historiography."

Stürmer's and Hildebrand's intellectual trajectories from the 1960s to the 1980s will be of considerable interest to future historians of postwar German historical writing. Overall their return to the positions of Dehio and Ritter will have to be seen in the larger context of the "conservative turn" that many West German historians completed in this period. It is certainly no coincidence that both of them played a prominent role in the *Historikerstreit* and have been laboring hard to diminish the influence of leftist and liberal historians and to help create a new historical consciousness—a key concern that emerged from the debate on Ernst Nolte's hypotheses concerning the origins and status of the Holocaust in modern history.[22]

The trouble is that, just as Nolte had to ignore tangible evidence relating to the Nazi "Final Solution of the Jewish Question," Stürmer chose to overlook primary material on the calculations underlying the Kaiser's naval armaments program held at the Federal Military Archives in Freiburg. This material showed that the Tirpitz Plan had, if nothing else, a dual purpose: It was to challenge the Royal Navy and the international status quo in the way that has already been explained. But it was also to shield the German Navy from the legislative powers of the Reichstag. The building of the above-mentioned sixty battle ships was projected in such a way that an *Aeternat*, an iron budget, would be established at the end of the building period.[23] This would have created for the Kaiser a large monarchical zone that was free from interference by the legislature. An

Deutsches Marine-Institut, ed., *Die deutsche Flotte im Spannungsfeld der Politik, 1848-1985* (Herford: E.S. Mittler & Sohn, 1985), pp. 57f., also for the following.

[22] On recent trends in West German historiography and the so-called *Historikerstreit*, see R.J. Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989); C.S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988); P. Baldwin, ed., *Reworking the Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990).

[23] V.R. Berghahn, *Der Tirpitz-Plan*, pp. 170ff.

Aeternat would have made certain that the naval budget could not be reduced by a majority vote in Parliament. Its power to appropriate resources on a regular basis would have been decisively undermined. The Kaiser as the supreme commander of the Navy could have used it as he saw fit in international politics, without having to fear budgetary sanctions from deputies that disapproved of his use of the Navy.

The *Aeternat* question has to be seen in the larger context of another domestic factor, *i.e.*, the universal suffrage in Germany. For reasons of his own which had nothing to do with the idea of democracy, Bismarck had introduced the suffrage for all males over twenty-four when he founded the Reich.[24] He and even more so his successors bitterly came to regret this step. For, while Bismarck had counted on the conservative vote of the agrarian population that he, the Prussian landowner knew so well, the momentous industrialization and urbanization of Germany in the final decades of the nineteenth century had created an urban proletariat that did not vote conservative. Worse, a growing number of Germany's working men voted for the Social Democrats who spoke of radical change and even revolution. Small wonder that the Reich government, and the political forces supporting it, increasingly came to worry about the day when the Social Democrats might attract a majority of the voters and its representatives might refuse to accept, or amend beyond recognition, bills that were crucial to the conduct of government. Small wonder also that far-sighted politicians like Tirpitz tried to forestall precisely such a situation by immunizing the naval budget from cuts by a left-wing Reichstag majority.

This is why the Kaiser's proposed navy has been called a "fleet against two parliaments," the British and the German one.[25] The link between the two was not just a power-political one in the international sense, *i.e.*, a challenge to the Royal Navy and Britain's global position; it was also a constitutional one. Unlike its British counterpart, the German Reichstag was not the power center of the political system. The prerogatives of the crown under Prusso-German constitutionalism were still decisively greater than those of, say, Queen Victoria, the Kaiser's grandmother. In the eyes of the Kaiser and his advisors everything had to be done to preserve this state of affairs. For Reichstag deputies, on the other hand, who were not arch-conservative monarchists, the British parliamentary system, whose members participated in the nomination of the executive and had the a say in crucial decisions of the state, had long appeared as a goal to work for. Tirpitz's response to these aspirations that were not lost on him was to try to block and to divert them toward the grandiose vision of a "great overseas policy." As he put it in 1895:[26]

[24] T.S. Hamerow, "The Origins of Mass Politics in Germany, 1866-1867," in I. Geiss and B.-J. Wendt, eds., *Deutschland in der Weltpolitik des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann, 1973), pp. 105-20.

[25] V.R. Berghahn, *Rüstung und Machtpolitik* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1973), p. 32.

In my view Germany will quickly sink back from her position as a great power in the coming century, if we do not now promote energetically, expeditiously, and systematically our general maritime interests, to no small degree also because there lies, in the new great national task and the economic gains to accrue from it, a strong palliative against educated and uneducated Social Democrats.

It may be argued that Tirpitz's concerns with domestic politics and the threat of parliamentarization and democratization are uniquely German. British or French naval ministers, by contrast, who were answerable to their national assemblies in the first place, can be assumed to have been much less worried about parliamentary interference in their building plans although closer scrutiny is likely to reveal resentments and attempts to contain deputies' "meddling" in military matters. However, it may be hypothesized that the monarchical governments of Austria-Hungary and Russia were strongly moved by internal considerations when they looked at naval appropriations and at how the demand for, and spread of, representative government might sooner or later affect their monarch's power position in the field of naval armaments. In short, the question that confronted Tirpitz might with profit also be posed when analyzing other national experiences with "navies and domestic factors."[27]

There is yet another such factor that the modern naval historian should be fully informed of: finance and taxation. The mobilization of military means of violence raises for any complex society the question of how the material and financial resources for the build-up are to be extracted.[28] This in turn will unavoidably result in domestic disagreements over how much a society should spend on armaments and how this expenditure is to be distributed on different shoulders in the shape of direct and indirect taxes. The pre-1914 Anglo-German naval arms race offers a particularly instructive lesson in the importance of this perspective.

However, ambitious, indeed megalomaniac, Germany's pre-1914 naval policy may appear to have been with the benefit of hindsight, its protagonists thought that it had been carefully designed in terms of all its implications. This applied also to the financial sacrifices that the building of a sixty-ship battle fleet would require from the German people. Created at a time of economic boom and general optimism about the country's future, the revenue from indirect taxes was expected to cover all the current costs of the naval budget, while loans were to provide for any additional expenditure.[29] With the Army, for reasons that have been outlined above, refraining from additional claims on the Reich

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[26] Tirpitz, *Erinnerungen*, p. 52.

[27] D. Geyer, *Russian Imperialism. The Interaction of Domestic and Foreign Policy, 1860-1914* (New York: Berg, 1987), esp. pp. 249ff. It is also interesting that Tirpitz's idea of an Iron Budget aroused the interest of other naval ministries in Europe.

[28] See M. Geyer, *Deutsche Rüstungspolitik* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1984).

[29] Berghahn, *Der Tirpitz-Plan*, pp. 271ff.

budget, the introduction of higher agricultural tariffs in 1902 was expected to put all military expenditure on a sound basis. Since the expansion of the number of ships was staggered over a longer time-span, the growth in the budget was to be made good by the anticipated growing tax revenue.

Unfortunately for Tirpitz the actual development of the early years of the twentieth century turned out to be different. To begin with, growth in revenue was not as fast as expected. But what put Tirpitz's optimistic calculations of the turn of the century into a fatal tail-spin was that Britain, suspicious of what the Germans were up to, added a qualitative dimension to the quantitative naval arms race that had gotten underway by about 1903. With the British decision to build the Dreadnought, Tirpitz, in order to keep up with the Royal Navy, not only had to build more and more ships, which he had calculated he could manage; rather London now also engaged him in a competition to build bigger and bigger ships.[30]

Worse from a budgetary point of view, they were more and more expensive ships. By 1907, it was clear that the next navy bill would require resources that could no longer be raised through the Reich's system of indirect taxes. Direct taxes on wealth and income also had to be increased. The stage had thus been set for a major political battle: indirect taxes—so far the mainstay of naval finance—had hit the mass of the population harder than the well-to-do. Working-class families spent a major percentage of their weekly budget on food. Once rent and other necessities had been deducted, little was left for savings and leisure. This is why higher grain tariffs had imposed greater burdens on the poor than on the rich whose expenditure percentages on food were considerably lower. The penny on the loaf of bread had thus become a critical issue. Some of the revenue for the next navy bill had to be taken from the wealthy through higher income taxes and death duties.

Knowing that an equalization of the burdens of armaments were a political necessity, if a revolt of the voters and a further leftward shift in domestic politics was to be avoided, Reich Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow prepared a finance bill that was to raise some 500 million marks. Four-fifths of the sum was to be levied by higher indirect taxes on tobacco, beer, and other "small pleasures" of the "little man." The rest, 100 million in all, was to be taken from the rich by means of a Reich death duty. The alternative would have been to abandon the naval arms race with Britain, as the shipping-magnate Albert Ballin had suggested in 1908. Fully aware of the dangers, both foreign and domestic, of a stepped-up arms race, he warned that "we cannot afford a race in dreadnoughts against the much wealthier British."[31] However, this solution was even more unpalatable to the Kaiser and his advisors than raising a direct tax on the rich.

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[30] Berghahn, *Der Tirpitz-Plan*, pp. 419ff.

[31] Quoted in V.R. Berghahn, "Naval Armaments and Social Crisis in Germany before 1914," in G. Best and A. Wheatcroft, eds., *War, Economy and the Military Mind* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), p. 71.

Before we look at the outcome of the huge struggle that ensued in 1909 over Bülow's finance bill, it is worth remembering that Britain was faced with very similar questions. Her situation was exacerbated by the fact that the Liberals, who had come to power in 1905, were also wedded to introducing a social insurance system. Having failed to achieve budgetary relief with the help of an international agreement to reduce armaments, largely because—significantly enough—the Kaiser refused to go along, the Liberal Cabinet in London adopted a solution that War Minister Richard Haldane had outlined in 1908. "We should," he argued, "boldly take our stand now on the facts and proclaim a policy of taking, mainly by direct taxation, such a toll from the increase and growth of wealth in this country as will enable us to provide (1) the increasing cost of social reform, (2) national defense, and (3) a margin in aid of the sinking fund." In short, the additional financial burdens were to be put squarely on the shoulders of the well-to-do tax-payers. Haldane also had a rationale for this strategy.[32] "It will," he added, "commend itself to many timid people as a bulwark against a nationalization of wealth."

This was also Bülow's argument on the other side of the English Channel when he launched his elaborate propaganda campaign to sell his tax package.[33] Unless the rich, for the first time, bore a slightly fuller share of military expenditure, the injustices of the tax system would be grist to the mills of the Social Democrats. Hearing a compelling argument about who it was who refused to bear his share, voters would move to the Left in ever larger numbers. The Reich government, unable to cobble together acceptable majorities in the Reichstag, would find it even more difficult to get legislation passed. The executive would be paralyzed and be forced to rule by decree. In a letter of August 1908, the Reich Chancellor wrote that the government must do its utmost to "convince the German people that morally and materially, this reform is matter of *life* and *death*" for the country.[34]

He quickly ran into the fierce opposition of the Conservatives whose voters had much to lose from higher direct taxation. As their leader, Ernst von Heydebrand und der Lasa expressed it, direct tax rights must not fall "into the hands of a parliamentary body elected on the basis of equal suffrage." What Bülow was proposing was thus the thin end of the wedge. It had to be prevented at all cost to close the door on a future expropriation of the wealthy by means of a steep progression in direct taxes. The Conservatives introduced an alternative budget which contained no direct taxes. Instead 400 million marks were to

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[32] Quoted in P.M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980), p. 335.

[33] See P.-C. Witt, *Die Finanzpolitik des Deutschen Reiches von 1903 bis 1913* (Lübeck: Matthiesen Verlag, 1970), pp. 199ff.

[34] Quoted in: P.-C. Witt, "Reichsfinanzen und Rüstungspolitik, 1898-1914," in Schottelius and Deist, *Marine und Marinepolitik, 1871-1914*, p. 162.

be raised through higher consumer taxes and stamp duties; the remaining 100 million marks were to be contributed by the Federal states. When this budget found a majority and Bülow's was narrowly defeated, the Reich Chancellor had little choice but to resign.

Reich finances continued to be in a weak state, unleashing major conflicts in the government between those who believed that the Tirpitz Plan offered Germany's only hope for a successful future among the great powers and those who wanted to reduce the naval build-up and come to an understanding with Britain, Tirpitz's arch enemy.[35] Worse were the electoral repercussions. Many voters were so disgusted with what the Conservatives had done that they registered their protest at the next poll by supporting parties which had opposed the Conservative bill. The first ominous signs of a rebellion could be detected in the results of the 1910 Prussian elections. Although their chances of competing on equal terms with the Conservatives were severely limited by the three-class voting (restricted suffrage) system, the Left made tangible gains. But the most impressive breakthrough came during the 1912 Reichstag elections in which the Social Democrats obtained over four million votes and moved into the Reichstag as the largest party, holding 110 seats.

In light of these dramatic domestic developments, it is difficult to see how the modern naval historian can do without a good knowledge of fiscal and economic history. Certainly the entire subsequent course of the German naval development up to 1914 cannot be understood without the chronic lack of funds that affected all aspects of naval life: ship-building, recruitment, training, technological and tactical innovation, preparedness for war.[36] Tirpitz's concern with the disruptive influence of the Reichstag and with the creation of an *Aeternat* may have been a peculiarity of monarchical government in the age of increased political participation. The problem of mobilizing resources for stepped-up armaments in an arms race situation, by contrast, was a problem that affected all modern states whatever their constitutional order. It determined the viability of entire societies—and not just in the pre-1914 period. It is an aspect that deeply impacts upon all countries to this day. The Soviet-American arms race of the early 1980s provides a recent example: President Reagan's "Star Wars" program was probably the final step of the Soviet Union into bankruptcy, leading to the collapse of communism; but it almost bankrupted the United States, with consequences to American society that are still being felt today. There is another factor that modern naval history has increasingly become aware of: the economic and technological infrastructure that is capable of producing the most advanced instruments of warfare. Since the nineteenth century, ship-building capacities have tended to be dominated by private entrepreneurs who took in orders for

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[35]   See P.-C. Witt, *Die Finanzpolitik des Deutschen Reiches*, pp. 316ff.

[36]   See M. Epkenhans, *Die wilhelminische Flottenrüstung* (München: R. Oldenbourg, 1991), pp. 313ff.

warships on a for profit basis. With the state being the main customer, a new relationship developed between industrial capitalism and the national government that was preparing for war. Statesmen may have had their own domestic-political and imperial reasons for naval building; private ship-yards were interested in the idea for economic gain and, in economically hard times, in order to stabilize the manufacturing sector of the economy. A particularly blatant example of this kind of consideration is to be found in a letter that Prince zu Salm, the President of the German Navy League, sent to Tirpitz on 3 December 1901.[37] Bemoaning the temporary recession and growing unemployment, he urged the Reich government to revive the economy with the help of fresh orders for warships, expecting from it a rise in related stocks and a consolidation of the market.

Nor is it a coincidence that pressure to increase the building tempo emerged in 1908 at the time of another recession in the ship-building industry. As Robert Count Zedlitz-Trützschler, the Marshall of the Kaiser's Court, recorded on 9 April 1909:

> The power of the steel kings weighs heavily, and worries about their business, their desire to create a bull market, have been served up to us as a national concern frequently before.[38]

However, the navy-industry link reaches beyond the macro-economic level of conjunctural ups and downs in the national or world economy. It also goes beyond the research that Clive Trebilcock has undertaken with regard to Britain in an effort to calculate technological and economic spin-off effects from naval armaments.[39]

Rather there is the often intriguing and underresearched field of cooperation, but also of conflict between industry and naval bureaucracies in technologically advanced countries. Thanks not least to the work of Michael Epkenhans a good deal of information has recently become available on the relationship between Krupp and the Imperial Navy.[40] If there emerged something like an embryonic "military-industrial complex," it was certainly not always a cozy marriage. This research shows that, however welcome state orders were, business was jealously guarding its decision-making powers against governmental interference. Conversely, the navy, especially at a time when it was starved of funds, repeatedly tried to squeeze Krupp's enormous profits by promoting competition between steel trusts and ship-yards.[41] Since industry was finally quite uninhibited in

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[37] Reprinted in V.R. Berghahn and W. Deist, eds., *Rüstung im Zeichen der wilhelminischen Weltpolitik* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1988), pp.289f.

[38] *Rüstung im Zeichen der wilhelminischen Weltpolitik*, p. 299.

[39] See C. Trebilcock, "'Spin-off' in British Economic History. Armaments and Industry, 1760-1914," in *Economic History Review*, 22 (1969), pp. 474-90.

[40] M. Epkenhans, *Die wilhelminische Flottenrüstung*.

[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 143ff.

supporting nationalist associations in their clamor for increased armaments, a link between domestic and electoral politics was established that deserves much more intensive study than has been undertaken for most industrial nations so far.

The least the naval historian who inclines toward a geopolitical view can therefore do is to be aware of the constant interaction of domestic and international factors and explicitly to incorporate the former perspective into his analysis. Armaments and their economic implications, as Gustav Schmidt has demonstrated, frequently acted as a hinge between the two spheres.[42] All this is not meant to imply that we must stop studying battles, the design of ships, or the state of the international system and its perception by politicians and populations in individual nation states. However, at the end of the twentieth century naval history can no longer be written and, even less, taught without a full understanding of the domestic context in which navies operate.

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[42] G. Schmidt, *The Politics and Economics of Appeasement* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986).

Chapter 5

Domestic Factors, Regime Characteristics, and Naval Forces

Robert S. Wood

It may seem banal in itself to suggest that domestic factors shape the size, shape, and character of naval forces. The key issues, then, are ones of degree and kind of influence, as well as whether or not the scholarly community is adequately or correctly assessing this influence. Beyond this general problem, there is a broader concern about the relationship between the character of a regime and the character of its military forces. Although his paper assesses the specific domestic factors that shaped German naval forces prior to World War I. Professor Volker Berghahn's study particularly points, consciously or not, toward this broader "regime" consideration. The following observations are thus keyed on his analysis.

Berghahn's paper on navies and domestic factors does two things: first, it gives a useful and interesting perspective on the domestic calculations that shaped German naval developments prior to World War I; second, it seeks, if not to dismiss, at least to question analyses that would attribute to power political calculations the dominant influences in those naval developments. As to the latter aspect of his paper, many readers will probably be tempted to shrug their shoulder and exclaim: "But of course! Does anyone seriously believe that any military developments are simply responses to the general problem of international anarchy and to external challenges posed by other states?" Such a perspective would have to assume that states are simply inert "billiard balls" whose motion is determined by the impact of external stimuli. It is useful, therefore, to look more closely at the "primacy of foreign policy" perspective and to determine what is at stake in this approach.

In most respects, the primacy of foreign policy concept is not an analytical perspective at all, but a doctrinal or policy position. It is grounded in an understanding of international politics that divides the world into politically-independent states who claim sovereign authority to define their internal affairs and external interests and to advance and defend their individual regimes and collective objectives. In a heterogenous world of scarcity, the definition of international politics as "anarchical" generally entails interstate competition and

a high degree of militarization of foreign policy. Even if one details the degree of actual political and economic interdependence, as well as social integration, in the world, the fragmentation of power and the continuing dominance of the state as the focus for social aspirations and control are still salient features in international politics. But, not all interstate systems are alike and the degree and level of cooperation, as well as of competition, are not foreordained by the general context of anarchy or specific external "threats." Both the nature of the regimes of the several states and the concept of interests held by the peoples and leaders of those states are crucial in determining one's international posture and therefore the shape of one's military power. One may analyze the policies chosen and justified by a particular regime, but one should avoid smuggling into one's analysis a determinism that neither the context of international politics nor the particulars of a regime could possibly sustain. Again, however, one might be led to remark that this must be patently true.

Therefore, to reject the claim that constitutional and policy prescriptions are in some near absolute sense determined by the necessities of the external environment is to repudiate those policy makers and the social groups who seem served by such a claim, as well as the academic scribblers who put their talents at the service of those leaders and groups. The "primacy of foreign policy," from this point of view, is an attempt by those entrusted with foreign and military policy to avoid scrutiny from other agencies of government and to shield their decisions from public inquiry. There is a particular scholarly perspective that sustains this attempt.

The viewpoint of those who embrace what Berghahn calls the "geopolitical and *realpolitische* approach" can thus be simply stated: In the absence in the international system of political power of either a central authority or an effective legal order, statesmen are driven to follow certain norms often associated with the concepts of reason of state, power politics, and balance of power. In a world of precarious external security and internal order, the notion of reason of state points to the belief that those entrusted with state authority have, if required, an extra-constitutional right to use whatever means are necessary to preserve or enlarge the power of the state. Logically related to this idea is power politics, that is, the accepted use of force by sovereign states to achieve political objectives. A world of states animated by the demands of reason of state and employing power politics leads naturally to the balance of power. The balance of power, in the words of Frederick von Gentz is "that constitution of neighboring and more or less connected states by means of which no one of them can damage another in its independence or essential rights without being restricted some-where, and therefore endangering itself."[1] The primacy of foreign policy is thus seen as a logical concomitant of this perspective.

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[1] Quoted in Edward Vost Gulik, *Europe's Classical Balance of Power* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1955), p. 81.

The primacy of foreign policy is a constitutional and policy claim. That claim asserts that the need to protect the state from external menace requires, first, a separation of international from domestic politics; and second, the freedom of the rulers to mobilize all instruments of power and shape policy as circumstances warrant, unencumbered by normal domestic political constraints. Peoples in oceanic powers, such as the United Kingdom, have been reluctant to embrace such an uninhibited sphere of political power. But, even the father of liberal political philosophy, John Locke, divided executive power into two spheres, ordinary executive power and what he called "federative" power, the latter being essentially compatible with the extra or supra-constitutional claims of the primacy of foreign policy. If the American founders followed Locke in many things, they clearly did not follow him in this. The American constitution admits of no claim to foreign policy primacy. Not only were there no persistent threats to U.S. security that would have justified such a claim, but it was felt that the protection of liberal democratic order within would be jeopardized by any such claim. Although from the beginning of the republic, there have been political and legal assertions of such a right, the weight of tradition and the relatively detached geographical position of the United States have on balance worked against such claims. We will return to this in a moment. It is worth noting at this point, however, that Berghahn focuses on continental and particularly German politics and here the relative attachment of states to each other can plausibly be seen as exacerbating the "security dilemma" and thus sustaining the claim to foreign policy primacy.

In the matter of pre-World War I German naval developments, Berghahn counters the "continentalist" claim to foreign policy primacy on two grounds. First, he disputes the contention that the presumed encirclement entailed by the Anglo-French entente in 1904 and the addition of the 1907 Anglo-Russian accord to the French-Russian alliance, compelled the German naval response. He appears to make this case by alluding to the fact that there were policy alternatives, including naval arms agreements, that could have been pursued more vigorously. At the same time, he also notes that the size and character of the actual naval developments were heavily influenced by the desire to maintain German social arrangements and to insulate the defense, including naval, budgets from parliamentary scrutiny. Now these latter points do demonstrate that domestic factors shaped naval developments, but they hardly touch the dragon that he is trying to slay, foreign policy primacy. Surely, no commentator denies any domestic influences; the issue is whether those influences decisively determined the rationale for and the object of the navy. It is hard to imagine any serious scholar evaluating military developments as a response exclusively either to domestic factors or to external factors. Moreover, his citation of Tirpitz's memorandum which implied that German naval developments could lead to a fundamental reordering of the international system would, as he himself admits,

sustain the geopolitical argument. Berghahn's most powerful argument lies not in his citation of specific domestic factors that shaped the navy, but in his second, and principal, analysis of the nature of the political regime as a whole.

Germany was not simply some generic state existing in some abstract anarchical international order. It represented a particular internal pattern of values and power, of social groups and diverse interests. As such, German leaders interpreted the challenges and opportunities of the external environment so as to sustain a particular vision of international power and a specific social pattern within. This was as true of naval as of other military developments. The *weltpolitik* of pre-World War I Germany was not abstractly required by the specifics of international anarchy at that time nor was the size and structure of the fleet and the social character of the navy ordained by an assessment of external threats. The very nature of the regime, even in middle Europe, was more important in shaping military and naval policies than the character of external dangers. At this point, however, one could well ask how the geopolitical position of Germany molded the regime and thus influenced its responses—proving what a seamless web domestic and international factors might be! This latter concern takes us back to the position of the United States mentioned earlier.

If one were to ask which was more decisive in predisposing the Americans toward a certain skepticism toward claims of foreign policy primacy—the geographical detachment of the United States (what one commentator described as a weak neighbor to the North, a weak neighbor to the South, fish to the East and fish to the West) or its political culture derived from British history and the English Enlightenment—the answer would have to be "yes!" Whatever the explanation, however, I suspect that some commentators might, in a kind of reversal of Berghahn's approach to Germany, seek to correct the "primacy of domestic policy" perspective as governing the American external posture and military developments. Here, as with Berghahn's explanation of German naval policy, an examination of the nature of the American regime might provide a suggestive approach to how American leadership interprets the external world and shapes its military and naval forces. One could make a credible case that in the absence of an overwhelming clear and present external danger (which is most of the time), U.S. naval developments will be determined by the resources allocated, the object of political-military engagements, and doctrines concerning the use of force—all of which are probably less determined by international anarchy and specific external challenges than by the character or the regime.

In the same way Berghahn challenged, or at least qualified, the geopolitical explanation of pre-World War I German naval developments, so analysts have questioned Cold War explanations for the U.S. Maritime Strategy and naval build-up in the early 1980s. This is often expressed in the query, was the maritime strategy a war-fighting strategy or a budgetary strategy? The maritime strategy and the forces associated with it were aimed at influencing and thus deterring a

general conflict with the Soviet Union that, though centered in Europe, would be global in character. It was presented as an attempt to use the mobility and technological sophistication of naval power, not only to secure control of those sea areas critical to the projection and sustainment of U.S. and allied forces in Eurasia, but to attack from the peripheries of the Soviet Union and Warsaw powers operational, logistical, and economic capabilities critical to the Soviet war effort. Attack submarines, carrier battle forces, maritime patrol aircraft, information systems, and missile developments were all justified on these grounds. Critics, however, said that the real target was the share of a growing—and then contracting—defense budget. The general threat of the Soviet Union insured that the rationale for the naval budget would be a general war-fighting capability, but the motivation for it was largely bureaucratic and domestic. So self-evident is it that general geopolitical and domestic concerns intertwine that this debate is not very interesting as a stark "either/or" proposition, even if one chooses to weigh the respective factors. Again, however, Berghahn suggests an approach that holds some interesting promise: regime considerations.

The fact that the United States is separated from many of its key interests by oceanic expanses is probably still a vital beginning for any examination of both the character of its institutions and its forces and strategy. Beyond this, however, one should push further the question to what degree the American historical experience, its current social patterns, the structure of its political institutions, its internal political struggles, shape not only the general U.S. external posture but the types, sizes, structures, and strategic-doctrinal approaches of its armed forces? Aside from revealing the peculiarities of various doctrinaires in historical debate, one might find nothing particularly exceptional in Berghahn's demonstration that domestic factors should not be ignored in explaining German naval development. On the other hand, to recover the almost Aristotelian concept of constitution or regime and bring that perspective to a systematic analysis of military and naval matters may both provide useful insights and continue to contain the propensity toward "billiard ball" explanations.

PART III
Comparative History

Chapter 6
Comparative Naval History

Paul G. Halpern

Naval history seems largely concerned with the actions of the great navies, those with the largest and most powerful fleets. In the First World War this has generally meant the British and the German navies, joined by the time of the Second World War by the navies of Japan and the United States. The navies of other powers appear at best in supporting roles, often relegated to acting in certain well defined and possibly confined areas. This does not mean the medium sized or smaller navies are without interest. They often represented considerable financial sacrifices to their own nations, they interacted and influenced each other, and in their own terms might often have enjoyed a measure of success. They were also small or medium sized only in comparison to the leading fleets. France, Italy, Russia and, until 1918, Austria, possessed naval forces whose potential could not be ignored. They all played an important role in furthering the diplomatic objectives of their countries or at the very least defending their own coastlines and colonies. The same could be said for smaller navies of, for example, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries.

For the purposes of this paper comparative naval history might be considered the inclusion of more than one navy in the same study. It is not necessarily a formal comparison, that is the British did the matter this way and the French that way, although certainly this could be involved. The comparison is apt to be less direct and often the term "comparative" would mean the study of different navies acting in the same geographical area. This paper will also concentrate on navies beyond the three British, American and German most studied by Anglo-American historians, and to remain within reasonable proportions will focus on the past century. The major objective will be to suggest subjects that need further study.

One might also question the utility of putting "comparative naval history" in a separate category. The basic methodology for this field is not really different from that employed by someone working in British or American naval history. There is the same need to establish what happened, and equally important, and perhaps more difficult, why it happened. The historian would use all material which sheds light on the subject, starting with the available naval papers both official and private and when appropriate going on to political and diplomatic

and the all important financial records. By now we all realize that navies do not exist in a vacuum, that they are a product of their societies and time and they are constrained by financial as well as geographical realities, human factors such as the pool of manpower available to man those ships and infrastructure, notably the dockyards to build and maintain ships and the administration to provision and fuel them. Naval history is also influenced more than many other types of history by technology. The concept of "holistic naval history" is now popular and certainly can also be applied to comparative naval history.

There is nothing here that is really different in comparative naval history except that by definition it will involve more than one navy. This is all fairly obvious, but there are certain aspects that make comparative naval history different. The first is that of language. Comparative naval history will usually involve using more than one language, quite possibly two or more. There is no way to disguise the fact that this is a major problem. Unfortunately, there is not necessarily any correlation between a talent for languages and an interest in naval history. Certainly, there are some who have a gift for languages or have inherited another tongue through family background. The historian who specializes in one country should, over a period of years, acquire by painful hard work a certain fluency in that particular language. But, in comparative naval history, one will soon move into areas requiring languages beyond the one with which they are familiar. The problem can be compounded by unfamiliar handwriting, employing script which does not use Roman characters, and, in the case of languages like Russian and Japanese, a completely different alphabet. Technology has actually added to the difficulty. Until recently, the average historian spent most of his effort on reading; writing and speaking were secondary. Now, oral history programs are being established and the naval historian is faced with the problem of understanding rapidly spoken and, frequently, colloquial speech.[1] Written transcripts of recordings are the exception rather than the rule. Certainly these are obstacles, not absolute barriers. However, they work against comparative history for one is now forced to balance the possible results with the frequently enormous effort to learn the language. Is it worth it? At times the comparative historian, who is not a specialist in a particular national field, may conclude it is not. After all, there is only so much time available and it will be more cost-effective to work in more familiar areas. One will then forsake possibly interesting fields of study. Russian and Japanese topics are obvious examples. Collaborative works with other historians may offer at least a partial solution to the problem.

There is another area where comparative naval history will encounter particular problems. The United States and Great Britain are fortunate in the

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[1] For an interesting example by the French Navy complete with analytical summaries (which are no substitute for actually understanding the text) see Marc Vigié, *Catalogue des Archives Orales* (Vincennes: Service historique de la Marine, 1981).

twentieth century in never having had to suffer enemy occupation. This has not been true of other nations. Archives have been destroyed, deliberately burned, or looted. This is particularly true in France, where the Germans made a systematic effort to exploit French archives during the occupation. The fate of many of these archives is unknown. The French Foreign Ministry was able to reconstitute many of its lost archives from embassy and consular records. The French Navy has not been that fortunate. The result is, in contrast to earlier periods, the records of the inter-war period contain many gaps. In fact, one of the interesting subjects for further study, not strictly naval, would be to attempt to trace the activities of these German archival teams by using essentially German records.[2] Who were they? What were they after? What did they publish beyond the German "White books" on the origins of the war? And finally, can we learn anything of the fate of these records? The hope that some might turn up in the former German Democratic Republic seems to be fading. The occupation of France by the Germans also resulted in parallel damage for the naval historian. There was at least one French admiral who quietly burned his private papers. There may well have been others.

The Austrian Navy is another example of lost archives. The navy was organized with a Marinesektion at the Ministry of War in Vienna. The major fleet base and the headquarters of the Flottenkommandant was in Pola. So too were other important naval establishments such as the Marinetechnischen Kommittee. Those duplicates or copies of reports that were sent to Vienna have probably survived. Unfortunately, the originals and many important records never left Pola. At the time of the collapse in 1918, one Austrian officer in his report of this period described how he was burning sensitive material before the Italians arrived. The Italians did acquire a large amount of material which they carted off to Rome and intended to use in their detailed histories for internal naval use. The mass of this former Austrian material is still in Rome, only roughly catalogued, and is an important potential source, although it is not clear how much may turn out to be relatively routine and how much of great importance.

In an ideal world, a historian will find in the naval or other archives the important plans, correspondence between the titular head of the naval and the most important commanders-in-chiefs, justifications for the naval budget, reports by naval attachés on potential enemies or allies, estimates of the potential threat, and, in time of war, the reports of proceedings and the whole multitude of supporting records which will help to explain not only what happened, but why. The official records will be supplemented by private collections of diaries and letters which will provide insight into the personalities and internal politics of the organization, the sort of revealing information given when people are not

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[2] A brief interview with Ursula Rüdt von Collenberg, one of those who worked at the French Foreign Ministry, is in David Pryce-Jones, *Paris in the Third Reich: A History of the German Occupation, 1940-1944* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981), p.244.

writing for the record to justify their actions and to protect and to advance their careers. That is the ideal world. In practice, comparative naval historians, like any other naval historian, must take what they can find, assuming the archives are even open to them. This is no different than what any naval historian has to contend with, but it may involve countries where the navy does not occupy the same relative position that it has in Great Britain or in the United States and where the cadre of supporting literature is likely to be neither as extensive nor as well developed. However, just as naval designers must make the inevitable trade-offs between speed, protection and armament, those in comparative naval history must sacrifice depth for breadth, if they are to keep their published work within manageable proportions. They must often, of necessity, rely heavily on the work of others for a foundation. This can pose a problem in areas where the literature is relatively restricted, but it can also signal those subjects where there is the need for further research.

The author of this paper has specialized in the Mediterranean area and the navies discussed in this paper naturally reflect this. The Baltic during 1914-1918 has also been the subject of recent study. The author's experience has reinforced the conviction that, in order to do comparative naval history, one needs a solid body of studies, based on national fields to support it. Certainly, a successful account of a limited period of time can be written on a comparative basis, but anyone who has done this is likely to realize that there is far more to the story than one can include and keep the work within manageable proportions. To put it another way, in comparative history, one is looking at a navy or navies on a horizontal basis, over a relatively short time, as compared to the national history which looks at it on vertical basis, over a longer period of time. Undoubtedly, the task of the historian is to pick and choose what to include as well as to summarize prior work when necessary. But in order to do this, it is necessary to have that solid foundation of studies for each navy. Unfortunately, such studies are not available for all navies.

This is particularly true in regard to the history of the French Navy over the past 150 years. It is somewhat misleading to stress Anglo-Saxon indifference to the naval history of France. The French, themselves, have this problem. A noted French archivist, Étienne Taillemite, recently published a work called *L'Histoire ignorée de la marine française.*[3] The title tells it all, the "unknown history" of the French Navy. The author is not referring to obscure events, either. He is talking about the major facets of French naval history and the relative lack of knowledge about them in France. He has a point. Although more than three quarters of his book concerns the pre-1815 era, the more modern period is no exception. Of four important monographs—as opposed to general histories—on the French Navy on the period between the Franco-Prussian War and the First World War,

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[3] Étienne Taillemite, *L'Histoire ignorée de la marine française* (Paris: Perrin, 1988).

two are by Americans and one by a German.[4] There is certainly, at least, one subject during this period that is worthy of further examination, notably the naval operations conducted by Admiral Courbet against the Chinese in the 1880's. These involve rivalry over Tonkin, an undeclared war with China, with the interplay between purely domestic politics and foreign relations, colonialism and, naturally, some naval operations that are very interesting in themselves.

The French Navy is badly in need of a study of its experience during the First World War. The operations are reasonably well covered in the series of volumes by A. Thomazi, which are based on the records in the Service Historique.[5] They are, however, largely confined to the operations themselves. The broader picture would include the relation of the navy with the other branches of the government and with parliament, the struggle for scarce resources to manufacture guns and ammunition or to build light craft to fight submarines, the allocation of precious manpower, the role of the merchant marine and the hesitant response to the submarine challenge.[6] There were fierce personal rivalries within the French Navy, partially illuminated by the parliamentary inquiry into the escape of the *Goeben* and *Breslau*. We need to know more about them, which admirals were in which "équipe" and what were the possible effects on operations and strategy. In 1917, it appears that political pressure forced the creation of the Direction générale de la guerre sous-marine (DGGSM) to counter the horrific losses from submarines. There is much more to be learned about this and the possible similarities to the British debate over the introduction of convoys. Furthermore, is there any link between serving in the DGGSM and careers during the postwar era?

The French Navy in the interwar period also deserves considerable study. Again, the relation between the navy and parliament is important. After all, the navy had considerable success in its building program by the outbreak of the Second World War. The French were particularly strong in fast, light cruisers and destroyers, exactly the sort of craft they had not had in 1914-1918. They had two modern battle-cruisers in service, two modern battleships nearing completion, and even a pair of aircraft carriers on the stocks when the collapse came in 1940. It is not surprising that the fate of the French fleet aroused so

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[4] Theodore Ropp, *The Development of a Modern Navy: French Naval Policy, 1871-1904.* Edited by Stephen S. Roberts (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1987); Ray Walser, *France's Search for a Battle Fleet: Naval Policy and Naval Power, 1898-1914* (New York and London: Garland, 1992); and Volkmar Bueb, *Die "Junge Schule" der französischen Marine. Strategie und Politik, 1875-1900* (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt, 1971); and Henri Le Masson, *Propos Maritimes* (Paris: Éditions Maritimes et d'Outre-Mer, 1970). A French officer, Admiral Ausseur, is reported to be working on a study of the period.

[5] A. Thomazi, *La Guerre navale dans la zone des armées du Nord* (Paris: Payot, 1924); id., *La Guerre navale dans l'Adriatique* (Paris: Payot, 1925); id., *La Guerre navale aux Dardanelles* (Paris: Payot, 1926); id., *La Guerre navale dans la Méditerranée* (Paris: Payot, 1929). See also the relevant chapters in Vice-Admiral Salaun, *La Marine française* (Paris: Les Éditions de France, 1934).

[6] A good example focused on one campaign is George H. Cassar, *The French and the Dardanelles: A study of failure in the conduct of war* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971).

much concern on the part of Churchill. But what of the fleet on the outbreak of the war? Did things look better than they really were? What of naval aviation? How did the navy sell itself to parliament and to the nation at large, in order to obtain the considerable resources it eventually enjoyed?

There has been an interesting study of the French naval officer corps during the interwar period. Ronald Chalmers Hood gave his book the title, *Royal Republicans*, and relied to a great degree on a few dozen extensive interviews, obtained through the alumni association of the École Navale.[7] Unfortunately, his study was very long in gestation and he did not make use of the oral history collection which became available at the Service Historique. This would have broadened his selection. His approach, as the title suggests, was largely sociological and he paid little attention to the 1914-1918 experience. But, it was a good beginning and it suggests an interesting avenue of investigation. He labeled certain admirals as "progressive." On checking their careers after reading his book, it became apparent that they may have had a common thread during the war, notably association in one way or another with the DGGSM. We need further study of certain important individuals, such as Georges Leygues, Minister of Marine in 1917-20 and 1925-33, and the Chiefs of the Naval Staff, Admirals Salaün, Violette, Durand-Viel and, of course, Darlan. The grandson of Leygues has published a biography of his grandfather, which includes extensive quotations from his diary, but unfortunately the only diary found deals with the period of the war and there is relatively little on his important post–war career.[8] Hervé Coutau-Bégarie and Claude Huan have written an excellent biography of the controversial Darlan.[9] They naturally concentrate, as have most historians, on Darlan's role in the Vichy government, but their chapters on the pre-1940 period are invaluable. From the point of view of naval historians, Darlan's career before the war is of equal, if not greater, importance than his participation in Pétain's government, the subject most historians have concentrated upon.

The literature in regard to ships, their specifications and design and chronological history has always been much better than the literature about why those ships were built in the first place and how they were supposed to be employed. This situation is, of course, not confined to the French. The late Henri Le Masson did publish an extremely detailed work on torpedo craft under the auspices of the Académie de Marine which included an analysis of tactics and strategy.[10] Unfortunately, the trend has been in the opposite direction.

[7] Ronald Chalmers Hood, *Royal Republicans: The French Naval Dynasties Between the World Wars* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985).

[8] Jacques Raphael-Leygues, *Georges Leygues: Le "Père de la marine"* (Paris: Éditions France-Empire, 1983).

[9] Hervé Coutau-Bégarie and Claude Huan, *Darlan* (Paris: Fayard, 1989). This has now been supplemented by their *Lettres et Notes de l'Amiral Darlan* (Paris: Éditions Economica, 1992).

[10] Henri Le Masson, *Histoire du torpilleur en France* (Paris: Académie de Marine, 1966). See also his work on French submarines, *Du Nautilus (1800) au Redoutable* (Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1969).

Recently, the French publisher Marines Editions et Réalisations has started a series on French warships, similar to the Anglo-American "The Anatomy of the Ship," although with far fewer drawings of internal detail. These volumes are heavy on technical detail and seem to be aimed as much at the ship-modeler as at the historian. Nevertheless, a historian can gather many useful details and, in the volume on the *Dunkerque* and *Strasbourg*, Admiral Louzeau speaks of the serious error of conception in grouping their main armament forward, an error repeated in the *Richelieu* class battleships which followed.[11] There are similar sentiments in Jean Labayle-Couhat's preface to the volume on the *Richelieu* to indicate that the rationale for this design must have caused considerable debate, possibly with strategic and tactical implications.[12] Labayle-Couhat has even more interesting remarks in his preface to the volume on the 7,600-ton cruisers. This time, he comments on the excessive dispersion of the fire from their 152mm primary armament. He attributes this to the lack of interest in materiel and claims that, after the First World War, the naval staff was primarily concerned with tactics and strategy and on the organization of command. Materiel questions were left to technicians, often younger officers unable to complete with highly touted engineers seeking perfection. The validity of these assertions is certainly an interesting subject for further research.[13]

Unfortunately, this is the period of French naval history where the gaps in the archives are likely to be most serious. The authors of the ship monographs have obviously found much technical detail in the central archives at Vincennes and the local archives in Brest and Toulon. But, for the higher direction of the navy, it is apparent that important files in the nature of the correspondence between the Minister of Marine and the Chief of Naval Staff are likely to be missing. Here, the naval historian will have to work around the gaps, perhaps trying the alternate approach. Fortunately, the collection of private papers at the archives for the period after 1918 is far more extensive than for the earlier years. What might be termed the "mirror" technique might be employed. If one side of the correspondence is missing, possibly the carbon copy or original can be found in the records of either the originator or the addressee. There is also the possibility that naval documents or papers relating to the navy can be found in the archives of other services or of bodies dealing with national defense. A notable example would be the files of the Conseil supérieur de la Défense nationale at the Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre. The papers of statesmen, such as Edouard Daladier, may also be of value. There have been some excellent

[11] Amiral Bernard Louzeau in Robert Dumas, *Les cuirassés Dunkerque & Strasbourg* (Bourg-en-Bresse: Marines Éditions et Réalisations, 1993), p.6.

[12] Jean Labayle-Couhat in Robert Dumas, *Le cuirassé Richelieu* (Bourg-en-Bresse: Marines Éditions et Réalisations, 1992), p.7. See also: id., *Le cuirassé Jean Bart* (Bourg-en-Bresse: Marines Éditions et Réalisations, 1992).

[13] Jean Labayle-Couhat in Jean Moulin, *Les croiseurs de 7600 tonnes* (Bourg-en-Bresse: Marines Éditions et Réalisations, n.d. [1993]), p. 5.

studies of French defense policy or diplomacy in recent years and a careful analysis of their bibliographies might yield useful suggestions.[14] In the final analysis, however, one will have to reconcile oneself to the fact that these alternate sources probably will not be adequate compensation for the missing files at the Service historique de la Marine. One will have to work with a lower level of documentation than would be the case for studies of earlier periods.

The great rival of the French Navy in the Mediterranean was the Italian Navy and it remains an important, but underdeveloped, field of study.[15] The Italian Navy was large, excessively large according to some, in comparison to the resources of the state. Italian naval designers aroused considerable interest abroad with their innovative designs. The story of how the Italian Navy was able to obtain so much from the state is an interesting one, which is closely linked to the development of heavy industry in Italy. Certain areas of that industry were described by one historian as a hot-house product fed by expensive naval orders.[16] With this in mind, a full biography of Ispettore del Genio Navale Benedetto Brin, Minister of Marine in 1876-8, 1884-91, 1896-8, would be most instructive.[17] Apparently, it was easier to obtain funding for new construction than it was for more mundane subjects such as maintenance and training. What is now needed is a study focusing on the navy rather than industry or politics.

There is another aspect to Italian naval history that needs to be probed. It is sometimes forgotten that the Italian Navy was a new and initially somewhat artificial creation. The united Kingdom of Italy did not exist until 1861 and, as the famous Piedmontese statesman and writer Massimo d'Azeglio put it, "Now that we have made Italy it remains to make the Italians." The navy was created from an amalgamation of Piedmontese and Neapolitan naval forces, which had been hostile to one another. The difficulties in integration were a factor in the disastrous performance in 1866. How did one integrate this navy? What, for example, were the careers of former Neapolitan officers and ratings? Were conscious steps taken by the navy towards nation building similar to those in the army? In the latter, troops were deliberately stationed away from their local provinces, a practice that was expensive and slowed mobilization.[18]

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[14] Examples would be Robert J. Young, *In Command of France: French Foreign Policy and Military Planning, 1933-1940* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978); William I. Shorrock, *From Ally to Enemy: The Enigma of Fascist Italy in French Diplomacy* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1988); and Nicole Jordan, *The Popular Front and Central Europe: The Dilemmas of French Impotence, 1918-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[15] The basic starting point would be Mariano Gabriele and Giuliano Friz, *La Politica Navale Italiana dal 1885 al 1915* (Rome: Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare, 1982).

[16] For this subject see Richard A. Webster, *Industrial Imperialism in Italy, 1908-1915* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975).

[17] An excellent short study is Ezio Ferrante, *Benedetto Brin e la Questione Marittima Italiana (1866-1898).* Supplement to *Rivista Marittima* (November, 1983).

[18] On this point, see John Gooch, *Army, State and Society in Italy, 1870-1915* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), pp.21-22.

As in the case of France, the role of the Italian Navy during World War I also needs to be studied. The massive eight volume study, *La Marina italiana nella grande guerra*, has concentrated on operations.[19] However, we need to know far more about the inner workings of the high command. Ezio Ferrante, making use of the hitherto unknown private papers of Thaon di Revel, has made an excellent start which needs to be expanded to other leaders.[20] The papers of the Casa di Savoia, if they are ever made public, would be crucial, since both King Victor Emmanuel III and his cousin, the commander of the fleet at the beginning of the war, the Duke of the Abruzzi, played important roles. Just as in France, there must have been a strong competition for scarce resources, and, in Italy, coal would certainly have to be considered a scarce resource. The political aspect of the war may have been even stronger than in France, for Italian coastal cities on the Adriatic were literally on the front line. Furthermore, there were also a series of disasters, such as the loss of the battleships *Benedetto Brin* and *Leonardo da Vinci*, which were attributed to sabotage, supposedly confirmed by the Italian agents who broke into the Austro-Hungarian consulate in Zurich in 1917. This subject has been the stuff of myth-making, indeed, there have been documentaries on Italian television which sensationalized it. The naval disasters during the war did produce lengthy parliamentary inquiries with extensive reports. It is now the task of the historian to shift through this mass of material and to try to separate truth from fiction and to establish what probably happened. The Italians have been heavily criticized by their British and French allies, quite often with good reason. Efficiency may not always have been a strong point. The reasons for this should be analyzed. On the other hand, it is now important to see things from the perspective of the Italian Navy, why they took actions and made claims that seem to others mere *sacro egoismo*. It is also time to lay to rest the old canards about Italian lack of courage, reflected in the jibe of the American general at a meeting of the Supreme War Council: "Well, they [the conferees] are all at sea, except the Italian admiral and he won't go there."[21] The refusal of Jellicoe or Beatty or Scheer to foolishly risk ships is regarded as common sense. Why should the same action by Thaon di Revel, under comparable circumstances, be regarded any differently?

The Italian Navy in the interwar period also needs attention. How did the navy fare under the Fascist regime, particularly when Mussolini, himself, assumed the duties of Minister of Marine during much of the period? How did they cope with the implications of Mussolini's foreign policy? The records in

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[19] Ufficio Storico della R. Marina, *La Marina italiana nella grande guerra* 8 vols (Florence: Vallecchi, 1935-42). A very useful up-to date summary is the anniversary edition of Ezio Ferrante, *La Grande Guerra in Adriatico: Nel LXX Anniversario della Vittoria* (Rome: Ufficio Storico, 1987).

[20] Ezio Ferrante, *Il Grande Ammiraglio Paolo Thaon di Revel* (Rome: Rivista Marittima, 1989).

[21] Hankey diary, 3 June 1918, quoted in Stephen Roskill, *Hankey: Man of Secrets*, volume I: *1877-1918* (London: Collins, 1970), p. 559.

Rome can be supplemented with valuable insights from the reports of the German naval attachés in Rome.[22] The question of naval aviation, the decision not to build aircraft carriers, relations with the Italian Air Force and cooperation or the lack of cooperation between the air service and the naval service are particularly important questions in the light of the experiences of the Second World War.[23]

The Italian Navy is well served by the traditional ship books. Indeed, the Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare was a pioneer in the field, launching a series of well illustrated and authoritative books on different types of ships in the 1960s. Some of these titles have been revised and reprinted.[24] In the scope and variety of its publications, the Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare has been extremely ambitious, publishing books that would probably be left to commercial publishers in other countries.[25]

It is nice to know the technical specifications of warships, the dates of their launching and so forth. But, as is often the case, there is a need to integrate this sort of material into the history of the navy as a whole. Biographies for twentieth century naval figures are also important and useful. Just as we need studies of Benedetto Brin, Cuniberti and the Duke of the Abruzzi for the earlier period, so, too, we need studies of figures such as Admirals Domenico Cavagnari, head of the navy in 1933-1940, and his successor Arturo Riccardi, head of the navy in 1940-1943. This is a period when the historian will have a particularly difficult time navigating through the controversies and apologia associated with these disastrous years in Italian history.

Writing the history of the Austro-Hungarian Navy has its own set of challenges. Perhaps, the first is to convince people that it even needs to be done. American, British and German historians with their vision of great encounters like Jutland or the great air-sea carrier centered battles of the Second World War are inclined not to take the subject seriously. Even those who specialize in the Habsburg Monarchy are sometimes guilty of this fault. A recent, and otherwise superb study of the Habsburg officer corps, dismissed the k.u.k. Kriegsmarine as

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[22] I am grateful to Professor Brian Sullivan for drawing my attention to this source.

[23] Published studies tend to concentrate more on the ships than policy. See, for example, Erminio Bagnasco, *La Portaerei nella Marina italiana. Idee, progetti e realizzazione dalla origini ad oggi*. Supplement to *Rivista Marittima* (December, 1989); *idem.*, "Una portaerei mancata: La *Francisco Carracciolo*. Altra ocasione perduta per la Marina degli anni Venti-Trenta", *Rivista Marittima* (May, 1991), pp. 95-107; and Giorgio Pellizzoni, "R.N. *Aquila*. La Portaerei italiana incompiuta", *Rivista Marittima*, (May 1989), pp. 93-105.

[24] The titles, by various authors, include, with date of first publication: *Le navi di linea italiane* (1962); *I sommergibili italiani* (1963); *Le torpediniere italiane* (1964); *Gli incrociatori italiani* (1964); *I cacciatorpediniere italiani* (1966); *I MAS e le motosiluranti italiane* (1967); and *Esploratori, fregate, corvette ed avvisi italiani* (1970).

[25] Commercial publishers in Italy also jumped into the fray with the series "*Orizzonte Mare: navi italiane nella 2ᵃ guerra mondiale*". The original titles had the imprint of Edizioni Bizzari of Rome, which appears to have been subsequently absorbed by Edizioni Ateneo. The series was resumed in 1993 by Ermanno Albertelli of Parma.

"a rather useless navy" and the author, in order to keep the study from becoming too long, chose largely to exclude the navy from the analysis.[26] This may, at least partially, be due to the fact the author is of Hungarian origin and, therefore, underlines one of the major difficulties the navy faced. Since 1867, the Habsburg Monarchy was a Dual Monarchy and Hungarian assent for naval expenditure was hard to obtain. Hungary is basically an inland state with little natural interest in the sea, although it should not be forgotten that before 1918 the Hungarians controlled Croatia and, thereby, had access to the sea through the port of Fiume (Rijeka).

There are some additional points that should be made. The navy was not "rather useless;" its strength was not negligible. It was growing and would have an important influence on the general naval situation. The development of navalism in as complex a structure as the Habsburg Monarchy was one of the more interesting phenomena of the time. Furthermore, the Austrians were not mere stooges of the Germans; they had their own plans and objectives. Finally, when put to the test of war, the navy was not completely unsuccessful, even if that success came in ways that had not been anticipated. The navy, on the whole, defended either directly or indirectly by deterrence the coasts of the Dual Monarchy, and, while the point can be endlessly debated, it is quite possible that without a serious fleet the hard-pressed Monarchy might have faced invasion in the South and might have had to fight on yet another front.

The financial aspect of Austria's naval growth is obviously of importance, as is the creation of a naval infrastructure of shipyards and armaments manufacturers that accompanied it. The political—one is tempted to say diplomatic—wheeling and dealing that freed the necessary sums of money for the navy is also of interest. We now have an excellent analysis of the period based on archival research.[27] This demonstrates how useful a full biography of Admiral Rudolf Graf Montecuccoli would be. Montecuccoli was Marinekommandant from October 1904 to February 1913, a period when the very nature of the Austro-Hungarian Navy was transformed.

Certainly, the same attention should also be paid to the naval officer corps that has been paid to army officers. The multi-national character of the navy must have posed special problems of command. How successful were they in overcoming these complexities? For example, in January 1909 a category of reservists had to be retained beyond their normal date of release because of the Bosnian crisis. The men affected were ordered to assemble on the quarterdeck of the flagship following Sunday Mass. The admiral commanding the squadron made the announcement in German, followed by his chief of staff, a Croatian,

[26] István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848-1918* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.6.

[27] Lawrence Sondhaus, *The Naval Policy of Austria-Hungary, 1867-1918: Navalism, Industrial Development and the Politics of Dualism* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1994).

who repeated it in Serbo-Croatian. Other officers made the announcement in Hungarian and in Italian, while the chief surgeon concluded with the announcement in Czech. The admiral, then, called for "Three cheers for the Kaiser" and believed the performance appeared to have had at least some effect on the dissatisfied long-serving reservists.[28] Perhaps, but studies on this subject seems to concentrate on failure, notably the Cattaro mutiny of February 1918. We need to know about the successes. Cattaro was an aberration and not the rule, probably due to factors other than nationality problems.[29]

The history of the Austro-Hungarian Navy has a problem which may not be solved. The after-action reports of proceedings were usually forwarded in copy to the Marinesektion in Vienna. These can be quite extensive and were the basis for the semi-official history by Hans Hugo Sokol, *Österreich-Ungarns Seekrieg*, published in 1933. The problem is, we know *what* happened, but we do not always know *why*. The internal fleet memoranda often did not leave Pola and they have disappeared.[30] It is frustrating to see in the report, for example, from the battleship squadron commander the statement that a conference of captains was held in the Flottenkommandant's quarters. There is no indication of what was discussed or decided. There are equally intriguing plans for sizeable warships, including battle cruisers. The rationale beyond these giants, which seem of questionable use in the Adriatic, is not given. Was there collaboration concerning naval designs between the Austrian and German navies? Are Austrian plans for huge capital ships an example of navalism gone wild?[31] The answers probably lie in the missing archives of the Marinetechnischen Kommitee in Pola. Will there be any clues in the largely unworked Austrian records in Rome? The future historian of the Habsburg Navy during the twentieth century is going to have to sort through those records.[32] It is known that they include decoded Austrian intercepts of Italian wireless messages. A careful correlation of this material may indicate the Austrians had something akin to Room 40 at the Admiralty and that they had some clue of what their enemies were up to. This, obviously, would have had an effect on naval operations.

The German naval records are another method of approaching Austrian naval history during the war, but there are definite limitations. The relationship between

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[28]   Admiral Anton Haus, Tagebuch, 1 January 1909, Kriegsarchiv, Vienna, Nachlass Haus B/241:5/vii.

[29]   The standard monograph on the mutiny is: Richard Georg Plaschka, *Cattaro—Prag: Revolte und Revolution* (Graz and Cologne: Bohlau, 1963).

[30]   The archival organization and gaps is discussed in Walter Wagner, "Das Archiv der k.u.k. Kriegsmarine im Kriegsarchiv Wien," *Österreich zur See* ("Schriften des Heeresgeschichtlichen Museums (Militärwissenschaftliches Institut) in Wien, Band 8," Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1980).

[31]   These points are discussed in Erwin Sieche, Communication to *Warship International*, XXIX, No. 4 (December, 1992), pp. 411-21, based largely on his "Grosskampfschiffs-Projekte des MTK aus der Zeit des Ersten Weltkriegs", *Marine—Gestern, Heute*, VIII, No.4 (December 1981), pp. 123-40.

[32]   Peter Jung, Marinereferent at the Kriegsarchiv in Vienna, is currently preparing an article on this material for the *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs*.

the two was not one of unbounded confidence and sharing. The Germans had a tendency not to take their Austrian allies seriously. The Austrians, in turn, could be resentful of the Germans, whom many felt did not understand their situation, although the Marinekommandant, Admiral Anton Haus, would become a strong supporter of Germany's unrestricted submarine warfare campaign.[33]

The Austrian archives do contain raw materials for further study of one aspect of the war at sea. The Allied barrage of the Straits of Otranto is widely considered to have been a failure. The number of submarines destroyed by the barrage were in no way proportionate to the effort put into it. Proponents of the barrage always argued that, at the very least, it would exhaust submarine crews and restrict their operations. In other words, there were intangible benefits to the barrage that do not show up in mere numbers of submarines destroyed. Because the German submarines operated from the Austrian bases, copies of the submarine logs were given to the Austrian authorities. The majority of these logs and those of Austrian submarines have probably survived. It should now be possible to go carefully through them and to note the circumstances of passing through the barrage. How many times did a submarine have to dive? How long did it stay down? What did the submarine commander see? Drifters? Destroyers? How far off? Did the activities of the American submarine chasers in the final months of the war have any effect? What percentage of the passage was made at night? The experiences of submarines seem to have varied greatly, but this is not surprising, since the numbers of drifters and other small craft the allies were able to put on the barrage also varied greatly. The information could then be correlated with the British reports of proceedings at the Public Record Office to establish the strength of the barrage at different intervals. Because the number of submarines using this route was relatively limited and easy to establish and the area to be covered also relatively confined, it should be possible to establish once and for all where the barrage was effective, where it was not and the real reasons for its apparent failure.

The account of how the French, Austrian and Italian navies, joined by their stronger allies, the British and Germans, competed with and then fought against each other in the Mediterranean, before and during the First World War, has been told in various studies.[34] There are now a sizeable number of articles and monographs to form the basis for a similar study of the interwar period, although the Austrians will vanish from the scene after 1918.

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[33] The author of this paper is writing a biography of Haus to appear in the series on Austro-Hungarian leadership during the First World War published by the Militärhistorischen Dienstes.

[34] Paul G. Halpern, *The Mediterranean Naval Situation, 1908-1914* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971); idem., *The Naval War in the Mediterranean, 1914-1918* (London: Allen and Unwin/Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1987); Mariano Gabriele, *Le Convenzioni Navali della Triplice* (Rome: Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare, 1969); and Adolphe Laurens, *Le Commandement naval en Méditerranée, 1914-1918* (Paris: Payot, 1931).

There is one aspect of the pre-World War I competition that might receive further study. This concerns the naval missions which the Great Powers were prepared to send to the navies that they wanted to influence. The British wound up in the embarrassing situation of having naval missions on opposing sides—Greece and Turkey—during the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913. There should be sufficient material in diplomatic and naval archives (and possibly the records of private firms) of the powers involved to study more closely these missions and their links with armaments sales. Naturally, this study of naval missions could be extended to other navies and other periods.

The Baltic area during the First World War is another theme where comparative naval history would be promising. It has probably not received the attention it deserves. Here, we have the Germans contending against the Russians, who fight a very singular type of naval war, employing mines extensively and coordinating their defense with coastal batteries on shore. The situation is complicated when the British send submarines to operate in the Baltic and give the Germans the problem of defending their shipping against them. The Swedish Navy also comes to play a potentially important role, eventually forming convoys and escorting traffic within Swedish territorial waters. The Germans are usually, but not always, the beneficiaries of this. The Russian Navy before the 1917 revolution is far from unsuccessful. Among the interesting points, the story is well known of how the Russians turned over to the British the German code books taken from the wreck of the *Magdeburg*. But did the Russians keep a copy for themselves? There is some evidence that the Russians were able to read intercepted German wireless traffic and, at times, acted upon it. Furthermore, the German Navy, in the early stages of the war, was a very different navy in the North Sea than in the Baltic, where they used their obsolescent warships. Of course, should they had chosen to withdraw from the North Sea, they could have achieved overwhelming superiority over the Russians. But, if they chose to face the British, the advantage might have been with the Russians, particularly as the new Russian dreadnoughts of the pre-war building program began to enter service. The interplay between North Sea and Baltic, on the German side, is interesting, particularly, since the titular German naval commander was Prince Heinrich of Prussia, the Kaiser's brother. Since there is some doubt as to Prince Heinrich's competence, a study of German command relationships should prove unusually interesting. The interplay between naval force and diplomacy is also important, with enforcement of the Allied blockade and concern for Swedish susceptibilities a complicating factor.[35] This is one of the reasons why use of Swedish archives might be very fruitful.

[35] Very useful and suggestive in this regard is the recent B.J.C. McKerchner, *Esme Howard: A Diplomatic Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and B.J.C. McKerchner and Keith E. Neilson, "'The Triumph of Unarmed Forces': Sweden and the Allied Blockade of Germany, 1914-1917", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 7 (June 1984), pp. 178-99.

The Baltic was also the scene of one of the major amphibious operations during the war, OPERATION ALBION—the German capture of Ösel island and the Gulf of Riga in October 1917. ALBION used to be studied at the U.S. Naval War College in the interwar period, along with Gallipoli, as an example of a combined operation.

Those interested in combined operations, that is navies operating together with land forces, should not forget the riverine operations of the First World War. While the Mesopotamian campaign is fairly well known in English-speaking countries, the Danube operations are not. A modern study of the Serbian campaign of 1914-1915 and the Romanian campaign of 1916 should be most rewarding.

This brings one to another neglected topic, that of neutral navies during times of war. The Swedish Navy in the Baltic has already been mentioned, but what of the Royal Netherlands Navy? The Dutch had the misfortune to have the proverbial pair of eight hundred pound gorillas fighting on their doorstep. What, if anything, did they do—or could they do—to enforce their neutrality at home? The question of their colonies in the East Indies is even more interesting. One is impressed, when reading accounts of the *Emden* in the waters of the Netherlands East Indies, at how frequently the Germans encountered a Dutch warship of superior strength, whenever they tried to use Dutch territorial waters. There is an interesting story here, if only to verify the theory that has been advanced that the Dutch were rigidly acting to enforce their neutrality so as to avoid giving the Japanese an excuse to move.

Other neutral navies are also of interest, notably the Danes and the Norwegians. They controlled strategic waterways and it would be nice to know more of their plans about, for example, mining the Belts to forestall possible German intervention.

The Japanese Navy during the 1914-1918 war also needs more attention from historians. Undoubtedly, active operations by the Japanese, in which shots were fired in anger and losses sustained, were restricted to the 1914 siege of the German colony of Tsingtao and to the 1917 operations in which destroyers were sent to assist the hard pressed Allies in the Mediterranean. However, the Japanese very actively exercised sea power, escorting the Imperial convoys from Australia and exerting that steady pressure which drove von Spee's German squadron westward to South American waters. The Japanese Navy joined the hunt for the German raider, *Emden*, and it was only due to the decision of the convoy commander that it was HMAS *Sydney*, and not the Japanese battle cruiser *Ibuki*, which finished off the German cruiser. By the time Spee's squadron was eliminated off the Falkland Islands, Japanese warships were operating, as well, in the western hemisphere off the coast of Panama.

In writing about operations during 1914 and taking into consideration the many demands on the Royal Navy in the first months of the war, the British

official historian, Sir Julian Corbett, admitted that it was hard to see how they could have acted so effectively in eastern waters without Japanese assistance. In 1917, the Japanese were again active in the Indian Ocean, when the German raider *Wolf* was on the loose. In writing of these operations, Corbett's successor, Sir Henry Newbolt, remarked that, in the Indian Ocean, the Japanese became the preponderant partner.[36] These Japanese operations involved regular use of Singapore as a base as well as other ports of the British Empire. What ambitions did this awaken within the Japanese Navy? What lessons might have been learned about submarine warfare (and forgotten) in the Mediterranean? These operations seem controversial in Japan and one post-1945 historian even appears to infer the Mediterranean destroyers were a mercenary squadron.[37] In this, historians have studied the role of Japan on a diplomatic level and as the background for internal politics in Japan, but how did things appear to the naval leaders in the First World War era?

There is another aspect of the World War that would lend itself to the comparative approach, that is, one that is comparative in the sense that the archives of different nations would be used. This concerns the German *Etappe* system of using German merchant ships in neutral countries and specially chartered neutral merchantmen, anxious for a profit, to supply German warships at large at the beginning of the war. This was obviously a diminishing asset, but it would be useful to take a close look at how effective or ineffective it might have been. The files of the *Etappen* system were allegedly burnt immediately after the First World War, to protect those who might have assisted the Germans.[38] However, it should be possible to uncover at least some of the work through alternate files or ship's logs. Furthermore, the German diplomatic records, especially the consular records, might contain considerable information. This was the sort of activity one would expect consuls to be heavily involved in. Certainly, British diplomats and consuls did what they could to frustrate the Germans and there should also be material on this in the British and French archives.

What of good old fashioned operational history? Of course, there is still a need for operational history—good operational history. Navies are meant to fight when necessary. When they do, there should be an accurate account of what happened and why. This sounds obvious, but in doing comparative naval history, one will run into areas where it is not the general rule. This would be

[36] Julian S. Corbett and Henry Newbolt, *History of the Great War: Naval Operations* (London: Longmans, Green, 1920-1931), Vol.I, p. 278; Vol.IV, pp. 216-17.

[37] Cited in Ian Nish, "Japan 1914-18" in Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, eds., *Military Effectiveness.* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1988), Volume I: *The First World War*, pp. 237-9, and 247, note 19.

[38] The burning of the *Etappe* records is noted in Charles B. Burdick, *The Japanese Siege of Tsingtau* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1976), p. 209, note 24.

particularly true of subjects involving the Russian Navy, where until recently, the Cold War has cut off western historians from access to Russian archives. There are still restrictions. Recently, the Russian naval archives did not permit a British historian to consult files dated after 1935. This, of course, would still leave plenty of leeway for the historian of the First World War.

There are three broad categories of literature dealing with Russian naval operations during the First World War. First, we have those works written by émigrés, anxious to justify the old Imperial Russian Navy in which they served and to rectify slights or lack of appreciation for Russian naval effort which, they insist, should not be seen solely as a backdrop for the Revolution and its anarchy. They suffer, though, from the nostalgia factor, the nationalist factor and the fact they were writing in exile, frequently deprived of written records and forced to rely on memory.

A second type of literature is that written during the Soviet period which, while often strongly nationalist and using archival citations, has a certain point of view to put across. The most accessible example of this literature, to those who do not read Russian, is the translation of *The Fleet in the First World War*, done under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution and the National Science Foundation.[39] Portions of this seem at best fanciful. The fact that the translation was done in India, by people who were not provided with a historical gazetteer, does not help matters.

The third method of looking at Russian naval operations is through the eyes of their German enemies. While the volumes of *Der Krieg zur See* dealing with the Baltic or the Black Sea are extremely detailed, they are obviously written from the German point of view, with all the disadvantages this implies.

It can be difficult to reconcile the three types of accounts. The language barrier has cut off historians from making even the best use of émigré literature. A good attempt to rectify this was made by a retired Australian naval officer, fluent in Russian, in a study of the Black Sea Fleet.[40] It is a useful beginning and cites many unfamiliar works published in the Russian language by émigrés, but does not include any archival work.

In addition to the Russian archives that are, at least, partially open, there are other opportunities in Russia to supplement them. The same historian who found the naval archives closed for material after 1935 also found that the Naval Museum in Saint Petersburg had an extensive manuscript collection. There seemed to have been almost a compulsion for people to put their recollections on paper in a land where the official version of history was subject to change. It now remains for the historian to correlate these new sources with what is already

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[39]   N.B. Pavlovich, ed., *The Fleet in the First World War*. Volume I: *Operations of the Russian Fleet* (English translation. New Delhi: Amerind Publishing, 1979).

[40]   George Nekrasov, *North of Gallipoli: The Black Sea Fleet at War, 1914-1917* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 1992).

known. The result is certain to be a better understanding of the Russian Navy and its leaders. The fact that the period of the First World War might be considered less sensitive than more recent years may also facilitate the work of the historian. Those working in more recent periods face serious problems, with access to the archives subject to the prevailing political winds and subject to capricious decisions which may be based on political connections and, in some cases, "on who offers the highest bid."[41]

One journal, *Warship International*, has recently begun to publish translated material from Russian sources. The bias is naturally towards subjects involving more recent naval construction. The somewhat fragmented form in which the information is presented can also be confusing. Nevertheless, it is exciting to read, for one can feel a sense of uncovering the raw materials of history. The recent publication in Russia of the memoirs of Admiral I. K. Grigorovitch, Minister of Marine 1911-17, indicates that we may now be proceeding beyond technical specifications of ships to matters involving policy.[42] It will be up to a future historian to put this material together and to interpret it. The subject of the Russian Navy in the twentieth century is one of the great opportunities for historians, provided they have the linguistic skills, and given the uncertain conditions in Russia today, a cast-iron stomach, the willingness to tolerate uncomfortable living conditions and the ability to wheel and deal with local officials.

This paper has shown a preference for the pre-World War II period, based largely on the author's special interests and past work. The post-World War II period, however, can also be productive. Once again the French Navy, after its archives are opened to a reasonable degree, will be very interesting. The study would examine its renaissance after 1945 and its transformation, from a heterogeneous collection of surviving pre-war ships, borrowed and ex-German ships, into a modern force which now plays the major role in France's nuclear defense. The French decision to develop nuclear powered ballistic missile submarines, largely on their own, owes much to Charles De Gaulle's conceptions of the Fifth Republic and of French grandeur, but it must also have involved an enormous effort and required a considerable portion of the state's resources. The French remain one of the few naval powers currently to have a full-sized nuclear powered aircraft carrier under construction. Furthermore, aside from the purely material aspect, the story of healing a navy that had been sharply divided between Vichy and Free French sentiments should be equally fascinating.

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[41] Mark Kramer, "Archival Research in Moscow: Progress and Pitfalls", *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, 3 (Fall 1993), p. 19.

[42] I.F. Tsvetkov, ed., *Vospominaniia Byvshego Morskogo Ministra [Memoirs of a former Minister of Marine]* (St. Petersburg: Deva Press, 1993) cited in "News of Naval Books", *Warship International*, XXX (1993), p. 359. The work is described as well edited with extensive commentary.

Chapter 7

Some Mild and Radical Observations on Desiderata In Comparative Naval History

William R. Thompson

The structure of this volume pairs an historian with a political scientist to discuss preferences for future research in various areas of naval history. The historian advances his preferences first; the political scientist follows with comments on the first paper, ideally without degenerating into inter-disciplinary squabbles over assumptions and methods. This strategy is an old device for pairing odd couple animals to pull wagons (for instance, a mule and a horse with readers permitted to assign their own disciplinary labels to the different animals). Presumably, the basic idea is that the wagon ends up being pulled more effectively than if the wagon driver relied on two animals from the same species. On the other hand, the risk is that the unconventional pairing will not cooperate in pulling the wagon either at all or in the appropriate direction.

I am happy to make the attempt to move the wagon of comparative naval history subject to the following qualifications. One, my observations are made as more of a consumer than a producer of naval history. This caveat grants me license to behave like the proverbial rich, but uneducated, art collector who knows what he likes when he sees it, even if he does not fully understand the art history context from which a piece has emerged.

Two, I frequently find myself uncomfortable with the mainstream assumptions of both the historical and political science disciplines. Whether horse or mule, it is difficult to conceal maverick orientations that, no doubt, will spiral to the surface from time to time. In the process, some of my observations will seem mild, while others may appear more radical. There is no need to apologize in advance for radical observations. The point, instead, is that any perceived extremism in my observations probably will appear equally extremist to both historians and political scientists.

Three, I have no real quarrel with Professor Halpern's desire to have more historical work done on major power navies in World War I. I agree that we need more analysis along the lines he specifies. In any event, this is his area of specialization and I lack any authority to quibble with his sense of priorities. However, I do have some different ideas about what comparison involves, why

one might wish to engage in it, and what questions in naval history are most susceptible to comparative inquiry. Thus, rather than focusing on World War I naval history, my own topical and temporal approach will be somewhat broader and certainly more eclectic in pursuit of different types of comparative strategies.

Professor Halpern presents one model of comparative naval history—the analysis of two or more navies operating within a specific milieu such as World War I. More generally, any study that involves "more than one navy in the same study" qualifies as comparative in nature according to this approach. In such a model, comparison tends toward the more implicit end of the continuum and, in fact, is often missing altogether as different stories are pursued separately. Of course, the extent to which that generalization is true ultimately depends on the analysis and the analyst.[1]

The relatively implicit comparative approach is not something to reject out of hand. The vast majority of the histories that have been generated have been produced on its premise:

> There is the . . . need to establish what happened, and equally important, and perhaps more difficult, why it happened. The historian would use all material which sheds light on the subject, starting with the available naval papers—both official and private—and when appropriate going on to political and diplomatic and the all important financial records.[2]

This is precisely what most historians do. They discern a significant hole in our information and comprehension base and try to fill it by examining the relevant archives for documents that speak to the what and why of human behavior. Much of our consequent information base is predicated on just such an approach. I, for one non-historian, would be among the last to suggest that we have no need for what might be described as "conventional" history. My own work[3] on developing data bases on some 270 military coups in fifty-nine states (1946-1970) and five hundred years of concentration and deconcentration in the distribution of sea and land power has relied heavily on conventional historical narratives. An ongoing project involving a contrarian approach to the question of why democracies do not fight one another involves a rather

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[1] However, there is a hint or flavor of the ethnocentric notion that comparison is something that one does when one is examining non-British or non-American phenomena. This peculiar idea is well institutionalized in American political science as well where students of domestic politics either study American politics or politics in other countries. If one does the latter, the analysis is referred to as "comparative" even though no actual comparative analysis may be attempted. The price one pays for such Anglo-Saxon ethnocentricity is less genuine comparison than might otherwise be the case.

[2] Paul Halpern, "Comparative Naval History," chapter 6 above.

[3] William R. Thompson, *The Grievances of Military Coup-Makers*. (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1973); George Modelski and William R. Thompson, *Sea Power in Global Politics, 1494-1993*. (London: Macmillan, 1988); and Karen A. Rasler and William R. Thompson, *War and State Making: The Shaping of the Global Powers*. (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

labor-intensive examination of the political histories of a large number of persistent democracies, intermittent democracies, and non-democracies.[4] Such an undertaking would be impossible without the availability of extensive political and diplomatic histories of the countries and periods of time of most interest. My only complaint is that there are still so many information holes left to fill. Thus, it is neither academic largess nor letting a hundred flowers bloom that underlies an appreciation for straightforward and conventional approaches to telling historical stories. It is self-interest pure and simple. Historical information and analysis is indispensable in its own right and for those of us who repackage it.

Nevertheless, there are other approaches to what comparison entails. One area of disagreement involves analytical motivations. How do we select the questions that we pursue? The implicit comparison approach often is motivated primarily by the perceived need to fill gaps in our information base. The rationale is not unlike the one some mountain climbers use when asked why they climb mountains—because they are there. Similarly, voids in our information are filled because they are there. For instance, we know quite a bit about British naval operations in World War I and comparatively less about the activities of the Austro-Hungarian or Italian navies. That observation represents one justification for analyzing, comparatively or otherwise, the activities of the Austro-Hungarian and Italian navies during World War I.

However, another approach to comparison—and one that is much more explicit in orientation—might be undertaken to analyze more general questions. For example, what was the role of arms races in bringing about World War I? One might study the same two states (Austro-Hungary and Italy) and their naval preparations for war to generate a partial answer to the arms race question. The answer would be partial because there were other naval arms races worth examining (in particular, the celebrated Anglo-German one) and non-naval arms races to evaluate as well.

A major difference between the implicit and explicit comparisons, then, is a matter of case justification. In the implicit case, it suffices to note that we do not know as much as we would like about the naval activities of state X. In the explicit case, the state of our information base is secondary to the more specific concern with locating possible participants in a naval arms race that may have preceded World War I. We may not know much about Chilean and Brazilian navy operations either, but we have good reason to suspect that, even if they

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[4] The approach is contrarian because most explanations of why democracies do not fight one another are essentially ahistorical. The prevailing assumption is that it must be something about democratic institutions that produce the selectively peaceful behavior. Just what that might be is the subject of considerable analytical debate in international relations. My contention is that a more important contribution to resolving the puzzle is found in the geopolitical milieus that have not only produced or facilitated the survival of democratic regimes but that have also made less aggressive foreign policies more probable.

have engaged in naval arms races, it would not have affected the outbreak of World War I. Only if our question about the causal relationship between naval arms races and war was stated in the most general way would all states, navies and wars become pertinent.

A third difference between what I am calling implicit and explicit comparisons is how we arrive at answers to our questions. What does it mean to explain something? I certainly do not wish to get into issues of the philosophy of science and the philosophy of history by raising this question. Nor do I wish to suggest that there is only one valid way to attempt to answer questions. However, I think it is fair to say that more general answers (to general questions) are apt to be more compelling, at least for some people, than are idiosyncratic answers.

One illustration of this problem is what is referred to as the "long peace" question.[5] As long as we do not count China as a major power, there has been no war between major powers since 1945. Whether the post-1945 era deserves to be characterized as truly or relatively peaceful is a much different question. Nor does the long peace conceptualization mean to suggest that major power conflict has been either absent or even always non-violent. The observation is only that the major powers have not gone to war with each other in some fifty years, with the accompanying implication that this is unusual.

Why has this happened? The three most popular answers are nuclear weapons, the irrationality of war and bipolarity. The development of devastating nuclear bombs and missiles has made a World War III, if not unthinkable, at least, considerably unlikely. The specter of nuclear war, along with other factors such as economic interdependence, contributes to the notion that war no longer makes any political-economic sense for the combatants. More would be lost than might possibly be gained. Finally, bipolarity stresses the idea that international systems dominated by two, roughly equal, major powers are more stable and less prone to showdowns than are multipolar systems.

The problem is that the contemporary long peace is not quite as unusual as one might think. There was, for example, no inter-major power warfare between 1816 and 1853 and 1872 and 1903. Now, it may very well be the case that the latest "long peace" has a different etiology than its two immediate predecessors. But that is something that requires demonstration. Moreover, the absence of nuclear weapons, bipolarity, and widespread feelings about the irrationality of war in the two earlier "long peaces" suggests that there may be more fundamental factors at work. A comparative analysis of the "long peace" phenomenon is obviously necessary to avoid a misidentification of why long

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[5] Lest one accuse me of injecting political science problems into a discussion of naval history, I should note that the "long peace" problem was first raised by a historian, John L. Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), and that at least one possible answer to the problem has a strong naval twist in the sense that a naval historian, Clark G. Reynolds, *Command of the Sea: The History and Strategy of Maritime Empires*. (New York: William Morrow, 1974) argues that these long peaces are actually "naval peaces."

peaces happen. So, the approach to comparison also depends on the question. Some questions clearly demand explicit comparison while others may not. If we ask what did Russian naval decision-makers think about their strategic options in year X, a comparative approach does not seem all that intuitively appealing. However, if we ask why did Russian decision-makers decide to go to war in the midst of a crisis involving the deployment of naval forces, comparative approaches begin to appear more attractive. It is certainly possible to answer this last question in a non-comparative mode, but there will always be some residual doubts and room for reinterpretation of the evidence. No matter how good the archival resources or how talented the historian, the reconstruction of the past tends to be an imperfect process subject to periodic revision.

A comparative approach would involve examining two or more decisions to go to war in roughly similar situations. This might mean comparing war decisions on both sides of a crisis. Or, it might require finding cases of a certain type that permit the analyst to reduce the number of possible explanations to something reasonably manageable and still generate a more general explanation of the type of behavior in question.

A fourth reason for engaging in explicit comparison has to do with theory. Theory comes in all sorts of formats. Some theories are very well delineated while others are more than a bit hazy. Some theories are arrived at deductively while others are more inductive in origin. Whatever the case, the contention is that we all, albeit to a varying extent, operate with them in our analyses. The question is not whether we, as analysts, engage in analysis with or without the aid of theories but, rather, how explicitly we make use of theory in our analysis. The more explicit the use of theory, the more likely that some type of explicit comparison will be found to be analytically useful.

These fairly abstract points about the desirability of explicit comparison can be made more concretely by referring to two illustrations of what I have in mind. The first example is Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*.[6] The second is C.I. Hamilton's *Anglo-French Naval Rivalry, 1840-1870*.[7] Not everyone may agree that these two works are unquestionably comparative analyses, but they approximate my own criteria.

Kennedy's examination of the naval history of Britain focuses primarily on one navy, but it qualifies as a comparative analysis because it asks general questions about the role of sea power (the timing of its salience and its relationship to economic and land power), and then proceeds to explore these general questions by studying the evolution of the British navy's role in foreign policy and war strategies. Basically, it represents a further testing of some of the arguments advanced in an earlier comparative undertaking, Mahan's *The In-*

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[6] Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*. (London: Macmillan, 1976; Malabar, Fl.: Robert E. Krieger, 1982).

[7] C.I. Hamilton, *Anglo-French Naval Rivalry, 1840-1870*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

fluence of Sea Power Upon History. The chapters are arranged chronologically: to 1603, 1603-1688, 1689-1756, 1756-1793, 1793-1815, 1815-1859, 1859-1897, 1897-1914, 1914-1918, 1919-1939, 1939-1945, and post-1945. The story about British naval supremacy is followed as it unfolds much as any other narrative story might do. If the different time periods had been compared explicitly to see whether the answer changed depending on when one asked the question, that alone would have qualified it as a comparative work.

The more overt comparative element, however, is the continued analysis of the Mahanian argument or, more accurately, the Mahan-Mackinder debate. The generalizations at stake initially were meant to apply to more than one state.[8] The analytical interaction between a general argument and a specific case therefore, is certainly comparative in spirit, if not, strictly speaking, in form.

Kennedy's work might have been more explicitly comparative than it was. The time periods around which the chapters are organized are as much for narrative convenience as they are for delineating the changing parameters of the factors involved in the interactions among land, sea, and economic power. For that matter, an entirely different approach might have been taken that would have entailed contrasting the evolutionary histories of two sea powers (*e.g.*, Britain and the Netherlands) or a sea power and land power (*e.g.*, Britain and France). Whether the answers to the general questions that would have emerged with these alternative foci might have been any different from the ones found in Kennedy is beside the point. There are several ways to skin the comparative cat. Kennedy's analysis of the rise and fall of the Britain and its naval lead represents one way to harness historical narrative to the pursuit of answers to general questions about comparative naval activities.

A second example, Hamilton's *Anglo-French Naval Rivalry, 1840-1870* might seem more obviously "comparative" since it is about the rivalry and naval interactions of two states (Britain and France). But it does not take on the structure that it might have—that is, switching back and forth from chapter to chapter and country to country. The focus is placed on the rivalry and not national historical narrative. Individual book chapters are organized around different angles or vantage points (*e.g.*, diplomacy and technological change, tactics and strategy, personnel, dockyards, and so forth). The basic questions concern the origins and termination of the rivalry and the role of naval changes in shaping the nature and course of the rivalry. In the pursuit of these general questions, Hamilton makes a strong case for naval considerations having played a significant role in the unfolding of the rivalry.

What do these examples have in common? Other than the ubiquity of the British navy and the high quality of the analyses undertaken, both works are about general questions in international relations that "happen" to have very

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[8] At the same time, it would not be unfair to suggest that both Mahan and Mackinder were strongly influenced by the British example in their geopolitical writings.

strong naval twists. In what circumstances is sea power superior to land power? What drives rivalries between competing naval powers? They also share singular foci, with one analysis concentrating on a single navy and the other a single rivalry. The number of navies does not really matter. What matters is the nature of the analytical enterprise. As long as the authors in question are grappling explicitly with general questions, they are engaged in a collective endeavor that draws upon past attempts to explain behavior and serves as a stepping stone to further efforts. As long as the collective endeavor is characterized by multiple cases, it is sufficient to allow an author with one case to participate in comparative analysis.

Yet even so, both illustrations suggest other dimensions of comparability. One draws upon change over time. The interaction of pertinent factors in different ways at different times can certainly be compared. The other examines the interactions of two states that, while involved in the same rivalry, need not have the same response to various technological changes or retain similar international positions over time. Comparison thrives on variance. If nothing changes or all actors act alike, there is little point in engaging in comparison. Because things change and because all actors do not act alike, we, as analysts, are presented with opportunities to explain via careful comparisons of selected similarities and differences.

One other common denominator in the Kennedy and Hamilton examples is the breadth of their inquiries. Neither author is concerned exclusively with naval matters. Few would challenge the generalization that navies operate in geopolitical-economic contexts and are highly sensitive to technological change. As a consequence, it is extremely difficult to suppress considerations of geography, politics, economics, and technology when examining naval activities. Indeed, comparative naval history should and frequently does highlight the symmetrical and asymmetrical interaction of these factors. It is certainly possible to study the biographies of admirals (or able–bodied seamen), battle tactics, and ship construction details from a comparative perspective. But unless these foci are harnessed to larger questions, their appeal tends to remain limited to *aficionados* of such topics.[9]

Putting aside biographies, tactics, and marine architecture, there are a number of middle-range phenomena in international relations to which comparative naval history can contribute. Most involve the interaction between states and the role of navies in shaping the natures of these interactions. One topic, represented by Kennedy, is the question of grand strategy. How do decision-makers determine (assuming that they do) what national goals to pursue and how and when do they draw upon the tool box of alternative resources (including navies) to implement these goals? How has the tool box itself evolved?

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[9] An exception perhaps is John Keegan, *The Price of Admiralty: The Evolution of Naval Warfare.* (New York: Penguin, 1988).

What are the historical relationships among land, sea, and air power?[10] Alternatively, who wins and what is the relationship between winning and the strategies chosen?[11]

Another complex of interactive processes with significant naval inputs are the rivalries studied by Hamilton, among others, and arms races, crises, and deterrence. It does not seem an over-generalization to say that while these topics, with the possible exception of rivalries, have received substantial treatment, the precise role of navies in them is less than clear. Are crises involving primarily naval resources less likely to break out into warfare because the bargaining instruments can be manipulated in more flexible fashions? Are all arms races subject to the same underlying dynamics or are naval arms races different from other types of weapons? The likelihood of all naval arms races operating similarly seems low, inasmuch as some are followed by wars while others are not. Why, then, do some naval arms races precede the outbreak of war and others do not? Do periods of rapid technological change forestall or accelerate the probability of conflict?[12]

Deterrence is about communicating, with credibility, the capability to inflict damage on opponents, if they choose to pursue undesired behaviors. Do attempts at deterrence emphasizing naval weapons fare better or worse than other types of emphases? Perhaps it depends on the nature of the pawns being fought over or, perhaps, it depends on the characteristics of the states deterring and the states that are supposed to be deterred?

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[10] Compare, among others, Alfred T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783.* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1890); John F. Guilmartin, *Gunpowder and Galleys: Changing Technology and Mediterranean Warfare at Sea in the Sixteenth Century.* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974); Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* and Chester A. Starr, *The Influence of Sea Power on Ancient History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[11] John Arquilla, *Dubious Battles: Aggression Defeat and the International System.* (New York: Crane Russak, 1992); Jeremy Black and Philip Woodfine, eds. *The British Navy and the Use of Naval Power in the Eighteenth Century.* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1989); Colin S. Gray and Roger W. Barnett, eds. *Seapower and Strategy.* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1989); Colin S. Gray, and *The Leverage of Sea Power: The Strategic Advantage of Navies in War.* (New York: Free Press, 1992); John B. Hattendorf, "Alliance, Encirclement and Attrition: British Grand Strategy in the War of the Spanish Succession, 1702-1713," in Paul Kennedy, ed., *Grand Strategies in War and Peace.* (New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 1991); Paul M. Kennedy, ed., special issue on sea power, *International History Review*, 4 (February, 1988); and George Modelski and William R. Thompson *Sea Power in Global Politics, 1494-1993.* (London: Macmillan, 1988).

[12] For a mixture of approaches to questions pertaining to naval arms races, see Samuel P. Huntington, "Arms Races: Prerequisites and Results." *Public Policy Yearbook.* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University, 1958); John C. Lambelet, "The Anglo-German Dreadnought Race, 1905-1914." *Peace Science Society (International) Papers*, 22 (1974), pp. 1-45 ; John C. Lambelet, "A Numerical Model of the Anglo-German Dreadnought Race, 1905-1916." *Peace Science Society (International) Papers*, 24 (1975), pp. 26-48; John H. Maurer, "The Anglo-German Naval Rivalry and Informal Arms Control, 1912-1914." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 36 (1992), pp. 263-87 ; Richard J. Stoll, "Steaming in the Dark? Rules, Rivals, and the British Navy, 1860-1913." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 36 (1992), pp. 284-308; and David D'Lugo and Ronald Rogowski, "The Anglo-German Naval Race and Comparative Constitutional 'Fitness,'" in Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein, eds., *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

Can sea powers deter land powers as readily (assuming for the sake of argument that they do) as they deter other sea powers? Or, is it possible that it is extremely difficult for sea powers to convince land powers (and *vice versa*) that they mean what they threaten?[13]

It was suggested earlier that we know much less about rivalries than one might think. What was meant is that we have a great deal of descriptive material about the ways in which specific rivalries have worked. But we do not know the general answers to questions about why rivalries begin, why they end, or what sorts of factors escalate or deescalate the processes of competition and conflict.[14] Since we do not have much in the way of general answers, it is less surprising that we also lack understanding about how naval rivalries might or might not differ from other types of rivalries. For instance, Hamilton argues that naval rivalries are in many respects easier to control than rivalries on land, but his 1840-1870 case involved a pair of states that were never fully equal in capability. Moreover, one state's position (France) was declining faster than the other's. The same state with the faster declining position was also more acutely threatened by the emergence of a new and adjacent rival (Germany). Which factor mattered most in accounting for the demise of the Anglo-French naval rivalry? The point is that we probably cannot answer this question very well if we are restricted to the one rivalry. More rivalries are needed. More comparative analyses are needed.

The contribution of comparative naval history is by no means restricted to questions of grand strategy, rivalries, crises, arms races, and deterrence. Navies figure prominently in the annals of European state building in the sense that sea powers tended to build much different states than did land powers. This is an area in which we have only scratched the surface in coming to grips with an understanding of the emergence of liberal republican and more democratic political regimes. Sea power was important to many of the early institutional manifestations of democratic regimes just as it was critical to the subsequent diffusion and protection of such regimes.[15]

Another line of inquiry that has hardly been begun is assessing the possibly critical role played by the development of naval infrastructure and related industries in the

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[13] We have several studies of Tirpitz's risk theory yet exactly where that episode fits remains controversial. If the risk theory is taken at face value, it suggests that one type of naval deterrence was spectacularly unsuccessful in one instance. If one suspects, on the other hand, that it was a domestic ploy to buy time and resources from a resistant legislature in order to build a fully competitive navy, then it must be seen as something else entirely (Paul M. Kennedy, *Strategy and Diplomacy, 1870-1945: Eight Studies.* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983). The problem is that we tend to dwell on specific cases exclusively rather than also attempting to see how specific instances correspond to other specific instances.

[14] William R. Thompson, "Enduring Rivalries in the Long Run," paper delivered to the conference on Dynamics of Enduring Rivalries (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University, May, 1993) advances a number of hypotheses on structural rivalries between global (maritime) and regional (continental) powers.

[15] See Karen A. Rasler and William R. Thompson *The Great Powers and Global Struggle, 1490-1990.* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994) for a crude stab along these lines.

economic development of the world economy core. Shipbuilding complexes, as for example in Venice, England, and the Netherlands, were among the earliest manifestations of relatively sophisticated industrial plants. In later periods, we have the related but somewhat different processes related to emerging economic sectors vital to naval construction seeking protection and government contracts in the downswings of the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. We also have various types of disguised and open industrial policies in the twentieth century by which defense research contracts encouraged the development of important industrial sectors. What role, then, should we attribute to the development of navies in fostering modern economic growth and development?

So far, I have been discussing the mild observations on possible avenues of inquiry for comparative naval history. They are considered "mild" because there is little controversy that the topics mentioned have very specific connections to naval matters. Navies presumably matter to grand strategy, rivalries, arms races, crises, deterrence, state building, and economic development. Exactly how much they matter may not be clear but most observers would not object linking navies to these various phenomena. All need and deserve more comparative analytical attention.

In the second section of this essay, I turn to what I suspect will be seen as more radical observations. These comments will take two forms. One is that we need more attention to what might be called thalassological perspectives on human behavior. Thalassological interpretations elevate the role of naval and maritime elements as unusually critical to an understanding of how the world has worked and continues to work. Naval history in general has a tendency to be relegated to the margins because its interests often seem too narrow or obscure unless of course dramatic sea battles are underway. Some naval history topics are narrow and obscure but thalassological perspectives would suggest that naval history in general deserves a central place because of its impact in shaping world politics and the world economy.

A second type of even more radical observation is related to the earlier comment that naval history is difficult to disentangle from its geopolitical-economic context and its sensitivity to technological change. I will suggest that history (and the social sciences) have not been as good at explaining long-term change as they are at short-term changes. To explain long-term change, we may need to develop a new type of interdisciplinary expertise in which comparative naval history is likely to play a prominent role.

More Radical Observations

The first more radical observation is neither naval history *per se* nor fully thalassological in nature. It concerns a social science theory about long cycles in leadership that features a prominent place for history and for naval power. Its

link to comparative naval history is that it offers some general arguments about world system dynamics that could be explored by comparative naval historians.

The theory gives particular emphasis to two dynamics.[16] The first has to do with intermittent spurts of radical innovation that tend to be monopolized initially by a pioneer economy and state. The radical innovations in commerce and industry elevate the pioneering state into a leading position in the world economy. But uneven growth is destabilizing. Some states appear to be moving ahead of their competitors. Conversely, some states appear to be falling behind. Global war breaks out as a challenger takes on the declining incumbent system leader and its allies in a showdown struggle over who will make policy and rules for global politics and economics. In the five global wars fought to date (1494-1516, 1580-1608, 1688-1713, 1792-1815, and 1914-1945), either a new lead economy usually allied to the declining incumbent or a renewed incumbent has defeated the challenger and its allies.

The challenger, whose decision-makers may not fully realize the extent of its challenge actually initiates a bid for regional hegemony predicated in part on its preponderance in land power capabilities. Maritime powers, depending on their location, view this bid as a direct or indirect threat. If their home base is located within the threatened region, the threat is acute. If the home base is located outside the region, the threat is potentially acute. Hegemony in the world's most important region would create an impressive foundation for launching a genuinely global challenge. Either way, maritime powers have powerful incentives to ally with one another and with other equally threatened, continental powers that can provide ground troops for the coalition against the regional threat.

The global war that ensues thus tends to reduce itself to a regional leader, primarily oriented toward land combat, fighting, ultimately unsuccessfully, on two fronts against a coalition of states combining sea and land power. The maritime leader of the winning coalition emerges from the global war as the system's leading military-political and economic power, thanks in part to the economic resources generated by the previous innovation surge that have paid for the sinews of global war.

One of the benefits of victorious global war participation is a newly acquired monopoly in the possession of capabilities of global reach. The term "global" as used here refers to intercontinental transactions over long distance. The premiere

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[16] Leadership long cycle theory is developed in George Modelski, ed. *Exploring Long Cycles*. (Boulder, Co.: Lynne Rienner, 1987); George R. Modelski and William R. Thompson, *Sea Power in Global Politics, 1494-1993*. (London: Macmillan, 1988); George Modelski, *Long Cycles in World Politics*. (London: Macmillan, 1987); George Modelski and Sylvia Modelski *Documenting Global Leadership*. (London: Macmillan, 1988); Karen A. Rasler and William R. Thompson *The Great Powers and Global Struggle, 1490-1990*. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994); and Karen A. Rasler and William R. Thompson, *War and State Making: The Shaping of the Global Powers*. (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), among other places.

capabilities of global reach have been, and continue to be, blue water navies. At the end of the global war, then, a new global order can be created because one state possesses a technological and naval edge over its potential opponents.

Another benefit of winning a global war is the greatly enhanced probability of a second surge of radical economic innovation. By extending the leader's edge even further, the several decades immediately after the conclusion of the global war tend to be the most opportune period for imposing some semblance of policy management and order. But just as technological innovation tends to be spatially and temporally concentrated, it also tends eventually to diffuse and move on to more propitious centers. Diffusion means some competitors are likely to catch up to the incumbent leader. Shifts in the locus of innovation mean that new leaders are likely to emerge.

As a consequence, the global system has developed a cycle of rising and falling leadership, buoyed by a pair of innovation waves and highly uneven economic growth, and punctuated by primitive and bloody leadership selection process. The pattern is one of a surge of radical economic innovation and the development of a new foundation for economic leadership, followed by global war and a reconcentration of naval capabilities, followed by a period of the global preeminence of a single state and a second surge in radical economic innovation, followed by a period of deconcentration in economic and naval leadership until a new wave of long-term economic growth establishes the circumstances for repeating the cycle.

Considerations of space and time permit only a cursory outline of leadership long cycle theory. Suffice it to say that a fair amount of empirical support has been generated for this perspective. Modelski and Thompson[17] develop and examine a five hundred year series on the distribution of naval power and found the five predicted cycles of naval leadership (Portugal, the Netherlands, Britain I, Britain II, and the United States). Rasler and Thompson[18] develop and contrast five hundred year series on the distribution of army and naval power and documents the pattern of partially dissynchronized cycles of land and sea power concentration and their relationship to global war. In addition, the theoretical and quantitative relationships among leading sector economic growth rates, economic leadership, naval leadership, and global war are predicted and confirmed in Rasler and Thompson.[19] Modelski and Thompson[20] develop empirical series on leading sector growth and innovation surges are able to predict and

[17] George Modelski and William R. Thompson, *Sea Power in Global Politics, 1494-1993* (London: Macmillan, 1988).

[18] Karen A. Rasler and William R. Thompson, *War and State Making: The Shaping of the Global Powers*. (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

[19] Karen A. Rasler and William R. Thompson, *War and State Making: The Shaping of the Global Powers*. (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

[20] George Modelski and William R. Thompson *Leading Sectors and World Powers: The Coevolution of Global Economics and Politics*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995).

document the existence and timing of paired innovation waves that extend back to tenth century China. The coevolving relationships among innovation waves, global war, and naval power concentration are also predicted and documented in Modelski and Thompson.[21]

The point of this brief overview of recent research in world politics is to suggest that powerful theoretical arguments and empirical evidence exist to demonstrate the salience and centrality of sea power not only to the dynamics of world politics, but also to long-term economic growth and a variety of other topics. Comparative naval history is not merely interesting to its devotees; it is also critical (or at least has the potential to be critical) to an understanding of basic political and economic processes as they have evolved over the last millennium. If the long cycle perspective has the story right, comparative naval history should not be simply a sideshow speciality within the larger undertakings of military and diplomatic history. Questions of naval leadership and its exercise, as well as the opposition to it, represent a respectable proportion of the dynamics of world order and disorder. These are questions that students of comparative naval history are well equipped to address.

I appreciate that everyone has not yet warmly embraced the long cycle perspective and its arguments. However, there is a second set of arguments that have a longer pedigree and yet advance similar or overlapping contentions to those found in the long cycle literature. I refer to the full-fledged, thalassological arguments of classical geopolitics that focus on the differentiation and tensions between maritime (sea) and continental (land) powers. While the long cycle perspective is restricted to the past one thousand years, classical geopolitics has an even longer temporal scope. The suggestion that I wish to make in this regard is that students of comparative naval history should be addressing the validity of these thalassological arguments more often than they do. They deserve to be addressed with greater frequency than they are not merely because they are about navies or because they, by the nature of their arguments, give navies and their histories great importance. These reasons are not to be dismissed as trivial but the major reason classical geopolitics deserves greater attention is that there is considerable explanatory potential in their arguments. There is also considerable face validity to their arguments. Yet, somehow, they have been largely shunted aside in the late twentieth century to make room for more fashionable topics. The question is whether some of the more fashionable approaches to accounting for human behavior possess as much explanatory potential as old-fashioned geopolitical contentions.

That is indeed a question. The suggestion here is not that we should adopt geopolitical lenses because they impart received wisdom. Rather, the geopolitical arguments deserve more attention from students of comparative naval history

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[21] *Ibid.*

because the arguments are interesting and focused on important issues of concern to naval history. Students of comparative naval history also have considerable expertise on naval matters that is essential to assessing the value and liabilities of geopolitical propositions. If they also encourage students of comparative naval history to broaden their perspective to encompass more territorially-based phenomena (in order to compare sea and land power), so much the better.

Of course, it is one thing to say that we should pay more attention to classical geopolitical arguments. It is quite another to specify just what the arguments are about and what needs to be done. Toward this end, I have assembled fifty-two geopolitical propositions of the thalassological persuasion from a fairly recent literature. The inventory is not meant to exhaust the potential set of propositions that deserve attention.[22] On the contrary, the fifty-two listed below were brought together quite quickly to illustrate the ready availability of strong claims about how sea power works and what influence it has over other processes.

The propositions tend to fall into one of three general categories. The first one concerns strategic policy orientations, how they are adopted, and what conditions favor adopting maritime versus continental vantage points. The second set focus on the domestic implications of maritime orientations. Strong claims are made linking basic regime and societal types as derivatives of geopolitical orientations. The third set of propositions are focused on how maritime and continental powers fight one another and why continental powers tend to lose.

No claim is made that these fifty-two propositions are all likely to be equally supported by historical evidence. Some, no doubt, are too extreme while others may be applicable only to limited periods of time. A few of the propositions may even contradict others in the inventory. But that is precisely the point. We do not know how consistent or well supported these generalizations are or where they do and do not apply. We should know more about them for they are not only very much about navies, they also link navies to the worlds in which they operate in nonidiosyncratic ways. And presumably, that is one of the main reasons why analysts engage themselves in comparative naval history.

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[22] The propositions are drawn exclusively from Clark G. Reynolds, *Command of the Sea: The History and Strategy of Maritime Empires*. (New York: William Morrow, 1974) and Clark G. Reynolds, *History and the Sea: Essays on Maritime Strategies*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989); Peter Padfield, *Tide of Empires: Decisive Naval Campaigns in the Rise of the West*, Vol. 1. (London: Routledge and Paul Kegan, 1979); and Colin S. Gray and Roger W. Barnett, eds. *Seapower and Strategy*. (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1989); Colin S. Gray, and *The Leverage of Sea Power: The Strategic Advantage of Navies in War*. (New York: Free Press, 1992. Another source of maritime/continental power distinctions is Ludwig Dehio, *The Precarious Balance*. (New York: Vantage, 1962). His propositions, which are not found in the inventory, are tested and coopted into long cycle theory in Thompson, William R. "Dehio, Long Cycles and the Geohistorical Context of Structural Transitions." *World Politics* (October, 1992); and Karen A. Rasler and William R. Thompson, *The Great Powers and Global Struggle, 1490-1990*. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994).

Thalassological Propositions: Strategic Policy Orientations

1. Two separate strategic policies recur throughout history as great maritime and continental powers have confronted one another. Despite the transitions from the oared galley to the sailing ship, to the steam and nuclear-driven ship and notwithstanding the appearance of aircraft, missiles, and nuclear weapons, seapower and land power have continued to be distinguishable. This strategic dichotomy is far and away the most powerful single theoretical tool for any attempt to understand how and why particular states, empires, and alliances have functioned as security communities.

2. Every country has a principal environmental orientation to its security concerns, either maritime or continental. Geographically conditioned traditions and largely subconscious habits of mind create all-pervasive strategic cultures.

3. States with long land borders with multiple opportunities for attack, territorial expansion, and defense concerns are unlikely to develop successful sea power.

4. Unless the maritime element within a state or the maritime state itself was actually or virtually isolated from domination by the state's continental ruling factions or foreign enemies and was situated along important shipping lanes for trade, it could not break away to evolve independently as an ocean-oriented state.

5. Maritime powers base their national political and economic policies and strategies chiefly on trade, overseas possessions or dependencies, and naval forces.

6. Maritime power implies diffused, commercial-industrial power. Successful maritime powers are allowed by geographical circumstances to concentrate a relatively greater share of their resources on market-acquiring efforts.

7. The commercial drives of a maritime power make profit all-important and once the cost of holding a colony exceeds its return, the tendency will be to discard it unless it is a vital strategic link in the imperial chain.

8. For maritime nations, the navy has been the main strategic arm of the nation's defensive structure, dominating the defensive policies of the home government, maintaining a generally offensive stance, and operating mainly on the blue water of the high seas. Maritime excellence can be developed and sustained only if there is an absence of intense competition for scarce resources with the army. Consequently, maritime armies are usually small by contrast to those of continental states, so that for large-scale land operations, the maritime nation usually must depend upon a large continental ally.

9. Maritime powers, vulnerable to external pressures on their food supply, raw materials and power sources, and thus primarily interested in maintaining their economic wealth through overseas trade, have sought to enforce a reasonable state of international order on the high seas so that the economic lifeblood for their merchant economy should not be interrupted or threatened. Navies maintain that order by policing the trade routes.

10. Domination of the seas by a great maritime power in the cause of economic and thus political stability has resulted in protracted periods of seeming peace. Each Pax has really been a naval peace, where supremacy at sea provides a major deterrent against serious challenge by unfriendly opponents.

11. Continental powers rely chiefly upon the produce of the national homeland and whatever political or economic advantage they can gain from their neighbors.

12. Continental powers have depended upon overland communications for their economic wealth and upon large armies and fortifications for their political and military security. Continental armies are usually defensive in character. The military history of modern continental Europe has been written largely in terms of armed frontier quarrels. Wars over disputed borderlands and improved security have been the rule. Attempts at outright permanent conquest of neighboring great powers have been the exception and invariably unsuccessful over the long-term.

13. For continental powers, the army (and lately, in combination with the land-based air force) has been the main strategic arm of the nation's defense. Its navy usually maintains a defensive strategic stance.

14. The attempts of continental powers to operate navies has been frustrated not only by geographic limitations but by related political, cultural and social considerations. Decision makers, preoccupied with defending the status quo at home and preserving their government from internal upheaval and external attack, have little appreciation for overseas enterprises and tend to be too rigid to adopt the techniques and innovations of the maritime powers. Investments are made primarily in the army. The navy is subordinated to continental objectives and assigned army transport and commerce raiding missions.

15. When continental powers have attempted to create a maritime empire replete with a navy, the navy soon discovers itself outside the mainstream of internal politics and national life, and eventually manipulated into virtual extinction by dominant, army-supported factions.

Domestic Structure and Implications

16. Maritime powers, in comparison to continental powers, are more politically and religiously liberal, economically competitive and wealthy, technologically innovative and advanced, industrially sophisticated, socially cosmopolitan and diversified, intellectually creative, and thus culturally dynamic. As such, the relative progressiveness of peoples with close physical proximity to the sea has been a major element not only in the naval experience of each such people but for civilization as a whole. It is not necessarily the sole determining force but rather one important catalyst for change and growth.

17. Maritime supremacies all evolved into catalysts of change, in relative contrast to continental counterparts, as explorers of physical and intellectual

worlds. They developed maritime industries, navigational techniques and engineering sciences with which to utilize the sea and thereby stimulated a genuinely high level of technology and industry.

18. Maritime insularity has been a key ingredient in intellectual ferment, the growth of applied technology and the fostering of democracy. If a maritime population can rely upon a formidable navy operating literally out of sight of their homeland to insure insularity, they can ignore such culturally inhibiting forces as military frontiers and forts, military strongmen and despots, standing alliances, frequent invasions and wars, and the whole mosaic of problems involved in counter-attacking, defeating, occupying, and reconstructing an enemy nation.

19. The growth of the merchant class has been more rapid and pronounced in countries that depend on overseas trade. Continental states have taken decades longer than their maritime counterparts to bridge or close the great gap between aristocracy and peasants.

20. Land power implies concentrated central power.

21. Continental powers are based on conquest and must therefore hold conquered people by armed force and suppress centrifugal tendencies. The stronger the centrifugal tendencies, the greater the repression that will be used. Maritime powers are not subject to the same compulsions principally because their sources of strength are diffused and flow upwards from commercial groups and corporations, not downwards by dictation. In addition, the colonies of a maritime power, whether overseas settlements in the historic sense or overseas corporations in the modern sense, are separated one from another and from the mother country and there is not the same need for a powerful central control.

22. The stability, loyalty, and trustworthiness of overseas colonies and dependencies are directly proportional to the strength of the mother navy.

23. It is not the forms of society and government which help to determine whether a nation will become a successful sea power, but the reverse: more open forms of society and government are more likely to develop in maritime power states.

24. Continental powers are trapped in economic straitjackets from which there is no escape, dependent on maritime competitors for manufactured goods and foreign bankers, businessmen, and shipping to manage large economic affairs.

25. A continental power cannot become an efficient industrial power unless it changes itself into a maritime power. If it does so, its forms of government and society will also change.

26. A continental power cannot build its industrial base in the same way as a maritime power without freeing its subject population to become market-acquiring commercial agents, thus increasing their centrifugal tendencies and increasing the need for central control.

27. If the tensions between central and diffused control result in the breakup of the continental power, it loses its formidable strength; if they result in the victory of the market-acquiring groups, the state changes its nature and becomes a maritime power itself; if they result in a victory for central control, the market-acquiring tendencies are suppressed and neither industry nor commerce will be efficient.

28. The social system of a maritime power is homogeneous, working upwards from each individual within it, a dynamic whole in which the successful rise, the unsuccessful fall. A continental power, by contrast, is based on central control, hence devolved rights and duties which are the reverse of the sea power's dynamic.

29. The differences between maritime and continental powers are most marked when the power is on the upward slope of its cycle. Developing maritime powers are characterized by very high social mobility and a slackening of constraints such as guild ties, while developing continental powers are marked by rigid social orders. The decline of maritime powers is accompanied by social ossification, the decline of continental powers is characterized by tendencies toward greater social movement. If the decline is catastrophic, the movement will be revolutionary.

30. Due to a mixture of organizational emphasis on individualism, discipline, and insulation from domestic politics, navies have usually been among the least political and most stable of institutions in maritime nations. Naval officers, due to their technical orientations, inexperience in commanding large numbers of men, and infrequent contact with governmental organizations, have tended to remain aloof from politics or to adopt a seemingly safer, conservative approach to politics.

31. Agriculturally (and later industrially) based, continental powers have depended mostly on the mobilizing, disciplining, and administration of large armies for defense and the effect has been a general tendency toward authoritarian government. Given the sprawling landmass of the continental state, a strong authoritarian government is the primary requirement for manning and maintaining a large standing army and fixed fortifications for external security.

32. With creativity constrained to political utility, the cultures of continental powers are generally bland and backward. Philosophy, art, science, and technology are subjugated to the will of the state.

Conflict Behavior and War Strategy

33. Wars, for the most part, have been fought to gain control of the land. States seek to control the open seas in order to affect or influence what is happening on the land.

34. Ultimately, sea power is not about the military efforts of fighting ships; rather, it is about the use of maritime lines of communication for the effective

interconnection, organization, and purposeful application of the warmaking potential of a coalition.

35. Maritime and continental powers often have had great difficulties in reaching the enemy's center of strategic gravity for the purpose of forcing a favorable decision. Since maritime powers typically can be beaten only at sea and continental power can be beaten only on land, struggles between maritime and continental states tend towards stalemate.

36. In major conflicts between maritime and continental powers or coalitions, each side must pursue a mixed strategy embracing both land and sea elements. These conflicts develop into contests to determine which side is better able to translate its original, environmentally specific, comparative advantage into success in the environment favored by the enemy.

37. The offensive is the stronger form of combat at sea because 1) an opponent has practically unlimited possibilities for evading a defender's forces and falling by surprise on some part of the defender's commitment and 2) the inventory of capital ships is relatively small and, therefore, sinking one or more of them tends to be an event of unusual strategic significance.

38. Continental powers can win wars against maritime powers if they are able to deny a tolerable level of sea control to their maritime-dependent enemies.

39. The most viable solution a continental power can seek in its quest for a naval presence is alliance with a maritime nation.

40. Although maritime powers cannot win wars at sea against continental powers, command of the relevant sea areas is an indispensable enabler for eventual victory in war.

41. Superior sea power typically functions to permit its owner to use time in the search for advantage. Sea power allows the protraction of conflict and tends to set up a frustrated continental enemy to overreach on land.

42. Because of the unity of the oceans, the coalition superior at sea has the advantage in waging a global war.

43. An important advantage in sea power translates into the ability to control the geostrategic terms of engagement in war. Another advantage is greater time to knit together the stronger coalition.

44. When frustrated by their inability to bring a conflict to an immediate satisfactory conclusion, a continental power or a maritime power typically will attempt what it can with the limited strategic reach of the preferred and available instrument of excellence.

45. A continental power confronting a maritime power will: a) at sea, resort to a raiding strategy, assaulting the maritime communications of the sea power enemy while endeavoring to avoid the concentrated strength of its naval forces; b) on land, attempt to eliminate continental allies of the maritime power so that the maritime power-led coalition will be unable to wage war on land; c) invade the maritime power.

46. The only effective response to a determined guerre de course is the expedient of convoying in order to oblige raiders to place themselves in the way of maximum harm.

47. Maritime powers have had to seek to acquire land power; continental powers have had to seek to acquire sea power. Different patterns of relative advantage have manifested themselves in ancient and medieval times as contrasted with the modern period. In the former era, great continental states persistently acquired the sea power necessary to defeat maritime foes. In the latter period, no sea-oriented coalition of states has lost a conflict with a continental enemy.

48. Continental powers must contend with more friction than must maritime powers. Physical and political geography impedes the extension, consolidation, and exploitation of land power in ways that have no approximate parallels at sea. The balance of advantage tends to shift to the maritime power in protracted conflict because dominant land power generates countervailing opposition that can be enlisted in a common antihegemonic cause by a preeminent maritime power.

49. Maritime powers are capable of strategic overreach at sea but continental powers perennially overreach themselves even in their own preferred environment of combat. Preponderant land power is far more likely, in effect, to wreak its own destruction than is preponderant sea power. Maritime powers are more likely to make better use of their superiority at sea for the generation and regeneration of landward fighting strength than continental powers have been able to turn advantage on the continent into the power of decision at and from the sea.

50. Continental power decision makers repeatedly have succumbed to the temptation to believe that their army can defeat the grand strategy of the opposing maritime power-led coalition.

51. Maritime powers and continental powers focus strategic confidence in their traditional military instrument of excellence. An essentially maritime or continental tradition more often than not leads to the misuse and underappreciation of the traditionally non-preferred military instrument. This underappreciation translates into less deterrent leverage than there should be for both sides of a sea power-land power confrontations.

52. There are no trends extant—technological, economic, political, or military—which suggest an imminent dimunition in the strategic leverage of sea power. If the coming of the railroad, internal combustion engine, and missile, nuclear, and space eras could not demote the strategic value of sea power significantly, it is difficult to see what could emerge to do so over the next several decades.

I have one last "radical" observation to make about comparative naval history. I have argued elsewhere[23] that the social sciences are much better at explaining

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[23] William R. Thompson, "Ten Centuries of Global Political- Economic Coevolution," paper delivered to the Workshop on Evolutionary Paradigms in the Social Sciences (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington, May, 1994).

short-term changes than they are in dealing with long-term changes. One reason is that the social sciences have become increasingly ahistorical.[24] Another reason is the marked preference for equilibrium-type models that assume simple and stable worlds. Still another reason is the insistence that behavior be meditated via human agents and usually in a rational choice format. It cannot be denied that these attributes of contemporary social scientific inquiry facilitate parsimonious theory construction and quantitative analysis. But at what cost?

One of the costs is that social scientists tend to overcompartmentalize themselves. Most economists deal only with "economics." Most political scientists restrict themselves to "politics." Most geographers study only "geography." To be sure, there are notable exceptions that include the hybrid specialties such as international political economy. Yet the problem is that causal chains in the social sciences, and especially for long-term phenomena, are frequently more complex than any one discipline or specialization can handle. The tendency is to follow causal chains as far as one's expertise allows and then stop the analysis in hopes that some other analyst will pick up the rest of the trail. Sometimes that happens but usually it does not.

Thompson[25] argues that long-term social science problems can be conceptualized as occurring within a matrix of reciprocally interdependent subsystems: politics, technology, economics, population, culture, and energy/environment. Each subsystem has a past that creates path-dependent tendencies.[26] Each subsystem encompasses a network of changing causal relationships. Each subsystem is also linked to each of the other subsystems in variably asymmetric and symmetrical ways. Thus, the parts are evolving over time and so is the whole.

The point is that we have done a relatively better job in deciphering how the parts work than we have in mapping the interdependencies and the evolution or coevolution of the whole. This problem seems tailor made for comparative naval historians. References to at least four of the main six subsystems (politics, technology, economics, and energy/environment) are quite common in comparative naval history. They are fairly common because they are so inescapable in unraveling questions pertaining to the development and employment of naval forces. And who should be more sensitive to path-dependencies than historians?

What is needed, however, are more self-conscious, explicit, and generalizable attempts to decipher how the parts fit together to make the whole. Therein lies the rub. Many naval historians are unlikely to embrace such a task eagerly. When they come close, the tendency is to shy away from general statements. Nor are

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[24] While social scientists tend to be ahistorical, historians tend to be atheoretical. Neither characteristic is very helpful in unraveling long-term processes of change.

[25] William R. Thompson, "Ten Centuries of Global Political- Economic Coevolution," paper delivered to the Workshop on Evolutionary Paradigms in the Social Sciences (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington, May, 1994).

[26] Path-dependencies refer to sensitivities to initial parameters or, in other words, the past.

they alone for it is a mission that most other analysts have also avoided. Still, it is something that at least needs to be tried more often than it is. Comparative naval historians might find that they are more used to dealing with the inherent interdependent complexities than many other types of analysts.

Conclusion

In sum, there are indeed a number of gaps in our understanding of how the world works and what roles navies play in the world's structures and processes. There are a number of ways to fill these holes. One way is to look at a single navy's activities at a time. Another entails examining multiple navies' activities. These can be done for one time period or for several time periods. They can be done narrowly or very broadly. The range runs from old-fashioned "saltwater narratives" to the complexities of coevolving subsystems. The comparisons that may or may not go on in the analysis may also be done implicitly or explicitly. Similarly, theory may also be relatively implicit or explicit in the analysis. We all have our own preferences on how to choose among these options. There seems little point in arguing for the superiority of one approach over another as long as the comparative analysis of naval history, in all its possible manifestations, continues to be attempted.

PART IV
General Naval History

Chapter 8
Considerations On Writing A General Naval History

N. A. M. Rodger

As recently as twenty years ago, it was possible for weighty scholarly opinion to insist that naval history ought to be regarded as a branch of military rather than maritime history, on the grounds that it dealt only with chronicles of war service, and could not pretend to the broad sweep of more serious historical subjects.[1] We have come a long way since then, but it is still easy enough to discern traces of the habits and attitudes which led the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences to give that verdict, and it seems clear that one of the most urgent tasks of the naval historian today, perhaps the single most urgent task, is to reconnect his subject to the main stream of historical scholarship. This means not only demonstrating its relevance to other historians, but also incorporating their insights into naval history. The two processes are of course mutually supportive. The same applies to integrating the naval history of Britain with that of other countries; a full comparative history is a formidable undertaking,[2] but no historian of one country's naval affairs can afford to be ignorant of enemies, allies and foreign influences.

None of this is novel or peculiar to naval history, and it would be perfectly possible to dismiss the problem of writing naval history as non-existent; to claim that there is, or ought to be, nothing in naval history which is not present in the work of all good historians. To a considerable extent this is true. The qualities required of the naval historian are those required of all historians, and the weaknesses of the subject correspond to a failure to attain the best professional standards. All historians would agree on the importance of basic scholarship, of

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[1] J.R. Bruijn, "Geschiedschrijving van de Marine", *Tijdschrift voor Zeegeschiedenis*, XIII (1994), pp. 3-17 at p. 3, referring to *Rapport over de huidige stand en toekomstige planning van het wetenschappelijk onderzoek der Nederlandse geschiedenis, samengesteld door de Historisch-Wetenschappelijke Commissie der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen* (Amsterdam, 1974).

[2] But see, for example, Christian Buchet, *La lutte pour l'éspace Caraïbe et la façade atlantique de l'Amerique Centrale et du Sud (1672-1763)* (Paris: Librairie de l' Inde 1991) 2 volumes; J.R. McNeill, *Atlantic Empires of France and Spain: Louisbourg and Havana, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985); Paul G. Halpern, *The Mediterranean Naval Situation, 1908-1914* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1971), and *The Naval War in the Mediterranean, 1914-1918* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1987).

a thorough knowledge of the sources. At the level of the monograph this must mean the documentary sources; at the level of synthesis, the printed authorities. If naval historians were in the habit of thoroughly exploiting the archives, and of reading all the relevant literature (including that in foreign languages), many of the defects of the subject would disappear. It is equally obvious that the naval historian, like any other historian, must deploy the intellectual skills to analyze and explain his material, and the literary ability to make it intelligible and interesting to the reader. It could be argued, therefore, that there is nothing required for naval history but common professional standards.

If so, the common professional standards are not as common as they should be. It is not necessary to be an advanced adherent of the *Annales* school to be dissatisfied with narrative history unaccompanied by any serious attempt to analyze causes and effects.[3] Naval history is certainly one of the few historical subjects in which there are authors who still think that success or failure can be explained by references, overt or implied, to the innate superiority of national character. Indeed, this is not all which some authors try to explain in this way: a recent book, which very properly emphasizes the critical role of sea power in securing the independence of the United States, does not scruple to imply that it was largely American ships which were responsible, and stops only just short of claiming that the United States Navy was founded in 1775.[4] This sort of thing easily explains the indifferent reputation of naval history among other historians, and it would be possible to compile a considerable list of books on naval history published in recent years, not only in English, which make no serious attempt to analyze cause and effect, still less to locate naval history in its national and international contexts. If this is what naval history is like, then other historians may argue with some plausibility that it is simply bad history.

It is not surprising that much of the bad naval history is written by authors who lack a professional training as historians. Retired naval officers will naturally tend to be unfamiliar with the techniques and approaches of historical research, and are bound to find it hard to view the history of their own service with detachment. But this does not sufficiently explain the problem. History is, happily, one of the few academic disciplines in which it is still possible for the amateur to make serious contributions, and non-professional historians have published and continue to publish many valuable studies which do authors and subject credit. Professional historians, moreover, are themselves perfectly capable of nationalist bias, tunnel vision and professional incompetence, and these defects are by no means confined to naval history. It does seem to reasonable to guess, however, that the more good historians tackle naval history, the more its standing as a serious subject will be enhanced, and the more it will attract better work.

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[3] Several recent histories of the U.S. Navy have been criticized for just this.

[4] Raymond G. O'Connor, *Origins of the American Navy: Sea Power in the Colonies and the New Nation* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1994).

Nothing succeeds like success, and what we need are some signal successes to turn the tide.

It might be easier for naval historians to analyze cause and effect if the subject had attracted more theorists. Always most popular among the pragmatic historians of the English-speaking world, naval history tends in practice to have lacked convincing theoretical structures. Mahan rather implied than advanced his own ideas, leaving his works to be pillaged by interested observers in search of justification for well or less well-conceived policies.[5] Such foreign theorists as Wegener[6] and Castex[7] remained until recently untranslated and unread outside their own countries. By far the most enduring influence has been Sir Julian Corbett, whose work retains much of its authority as an explanation of naval strategy.[8] But Corbett was a strategist, not an historical theorist or a political scientist: he did not attempt to explain why navies exist, or how and why some nations have supported successful navies, some unsuccessful ones, and some none at all.

For writers of his generation it could be more or less taken for granted that the Navy had made the Empire, and the Empire had made Britain great. We can see now that this line, if not necessarily wrong in itself, raises more questions than it answers. If navies are necessary to empire, and empire is necessary to greatness, the connections between them ought to be closer and clearer than they actually were. Why did medieval England attempt at vast cost to sustain an overseas empire without a navy, when Anglo-Saxon England had successfully employed one? If the meaning of a navy is to be sought in connection with empire, what was the point of Queen Elizabeth's navy? No-one now would seriously argue that she had, or intended to have an overseas empire,[9] but she unquestionably had a powerful modern fleet. In this she contrasts sharply with Philip II of Spain, who had the greatest oceanic empire in the world, but no regular navy outside the Mediterranean.[10] We might equally note that the sun did not begin to set on the Spanish empire until the nineteenth century, by which time the Spanish fleet had been outclassed for most of four centuries,

[5] James Goldrick & John B. Hattendorf, eds., *Mahan is Not Enough* (Newport: Naval War College Press, 1993).

[6] Wolfgang Wegener, *Die Seestrategie des Weltkrieges* (Berlin: E.S. Mittler, 1929); *The Naval Strategy of the World War*. Translated and edited by Holger H. Herwig (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1989).

[7] R.V.P. Castex, *Théories Stratégiques* (Paris, 1929-35, 5 vols); *Strategic Theories*, edited and translated by Eugenia Kiesling (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1993). On Castex, see Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, *La Puissance Maritime: Castex et la stratégie navale* (Paris: Fayard, 1985), with an admirable survey of the literature on naval strategy in all languages.

[8] Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (London, 1911; Edited with an introduction by Eric Grove (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1986).

[9] Even the Irish expedition was undertaken reluctantly, right at the end of her reign, long after the Tudor fleet was well established.

[10] Excepting the Portuguese galleons, after the occupation of that country in 1580.

while the British were careless enough to lose two empires (in the Americas in the 1770s and the Far East in the 1940s) at high points in their naval strength. Britain enjoyed an industrial revolution at a time of naval supremacy, but approximately in the interval between the dissolution of one empire and the construction of another.

The Dutch and Portuguese maintained the longest-lived of all European colonial empires with the feeblest of European navies. These are obvious puzzles, largely ignored, which would be easier to explain if more attention had been offered to matters of theory.[11] Only now, with the appearance of Jan Glete's *Navies and Nations*,[12] have we acquired a coherent theoretical interpretation of navies in terms of Continental ideas of *staatenbildung*. This is a rich and powerful synthesis of international naval history, stiffened by a valuable theoretical framework, which ought in time to advance the subject to a much higher intellectual level. It is also one of the first books to confront a very obvious problem in naval history. For the historian of the seventeenth to twentieth centuries it is possible, indeed customary, to define the subject as the history of an institution, the Navy. This is not realistic or satisfactory for any period, for no navy of any nation has ever monopolized naval warfare, nor could any navy in any period be regarded as an autonomous institution divorced from the state and society which it represents. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, moreover, this interpretation is simply impossible, for in this period a state navy was only one of a range of possibilities for making war at sea. Elizabeth I of England had a permanent navy, recognizably of the modern type, but almost none of its personnel were in her full-time service. Administrators, admirals, officers and men were also private merchants, contractors, shipowners, shipmasters and seamen, investors and participants in privateering operations. The Queen herself contributed her ships to privateering cruises as a private investor. The Navy Royal was only one, admittedly important, section of a national naval capability most of which did not belong to the crown.[13]

In Spain, the same was even more true. Philip II possessed as many as seven navies,[14] but all were regional forces belonging to constituent parts of his empire

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[11] Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), applies French Marxist thinking of thirty years ago to maritime social history, but is open to the same objection as it was; that even the best theory is no substitute for research.

[12] *Navies and Nations: Warships, Navies and State Building in Europe and America 1500-1860* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1993) 2 volumes.

[13] David Loades, *The Tudor Navy: An Administrative, Political and Military History* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1992).

[14] The galley fleets of the Crown of Aragon at Barcelona, the Viceroy of Sicily at Naples, and the Crown of Castile at Seville; The Armada de Flandes at Brill (until 1577) and later Dunkirk, the Armada de Barlovento in the Caribbean, the Armada del Mar del Sur in the Pacific, and the Portuguese fleet (after 1580).

rather than to the whole, and only one was capable of operations on the high seas. None of them was much involved in the principal 'naval' activity of the empire, the escorting of the annual plate fleets across the Atlantic, which was undertaken by a squadron of armed merchantmen, the *Guarda de Indias*, provided by a chartered merchant guild, the Casa de Contratación in Seville, from the proceeds of a compulsory levy on the value of cargoes shipped under escort.[15] Even this system was simplicity itself compared with Dutch naval forces in the seventeenth century, which were provided by five independent provincial admiralties,[16] the States General on behalf of the Republic, two joint-stock companies (the East and West India Companies), several insurance syndicates and a great number of privateer owners.[17] Yet these were the instruments which raised the Dutch Republic to be the greatest naval power and the wealthiest trading nation in the world, and to write of this rise as though only the State's fleet were involved would be palpably absurd. So any comprehensive naval history has to be much more than the history of a navy.

We have to ask what it is about naval history in practice which deters good historians, or prevents them from reaching the best standards. One answer is certainly that it is seen as a difficult as well as an unrewarding subject. Historians who have attempted to write naval history—and perhaps even more, those who have not—perceive particular difficulties in the subject. Firstly, naval history is above all technical history. In every era of history, warships and sea fighting have involved the most advanced and complex technologies of the period. It is impossible to understand or explain what went on at sea without coming to grips with the technologies concerned. Historians are aware of this, and one suspects that many of them are daunted by it. There are real obstacles, both practical and psychological, to mastering high technologies, especially more or less completely extinct technologies. On a psychological level, historians with no education in mathematics or science (which includes a large majority of British historians, myself among them) are easily frightened by high technology. It may not be as difficult as it looks, but it looks difficult enough, and those who have mastered, say, navigation or naval architecture, do not always go out of their way to explain themselves to the uninitiated. These, moreover, are current technologies with living experts to write and speak about them; it is much harder to learn how to handle a large ship under sail. Few historians will have the opportunity to get much experience at sea, and in any case a modern sail-training ship differs so much from, say, a seventeenth or eighteenth-century warship that the experience is of doubtful relevance anyway. This is not to say that seafaring

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[15]   Ricardo Cerezo Martínez, *Las armadas de Felipe II* (Madrid: 1989).

[16]   The Admiralties of Amsterdam, of the Maze (at Rotterdam), of Zealand (at Middleburg), of Friesland (at Harlingen), and of the North Quarter (alternating every six months between Hoorn and Enkhuizen).

[17]   Jaap R. Bruijn, *The Dutch Navy of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1993).

experience is valueless, but it can be highly misleading without deep historical knowledge.[18] Many types of ship once important to naval history (notably the galley) have entirely disappeared. The modern practice of building and making trial of seagoing replicas of historical craft has done a great deal to remedy our ignorance in some areas, notably the Viking age, and in Scandinavia there are now so many more or less authentic reconstructions that it is possible to hold 'Viking regattas'. The building of the trireme *Olympias* has been a very notable and inspiring example of co-operation between the scholar and the naval architect.[19] When all this has been said, however, a regatta is not a perfect image of war. There is a limit to what can be learned even from a real ship about the realities of ancient warfare, and no-one is likely to be able to build a ship of the line, still less a fleet of ships of the line, for the historian to play with. In the end much will depend, as it always does in history, on the imaginative sympathy of the historian to appreciate the real problems and possibilities of the past. It can be done, in naval history as in any other area of history, by those who are prepared to invest time and trouble in mastering the complex and unfamiliar. This is not a subject to recommend to anyone in search of a quick and painless path to scholarly knowledge, but there is no reason to be frightened of it. The essential is to be prepared to invest time and effort in mastering lost technologies.

The problem in actual practice has been that writers of naval history tend to be drawn from two distinct camps. On the one hand those with an education as historians, more or less accustomed to taking a large view and to locating their findings in an historical context, may shy away from technical questions because they do not understand them, or even because they do not accept them as being of real historical interest. Those who do understand, on the other hand, sometimes display a narrowly antiquarian pleasure in the amassing of facts, or supposed facts, without asking themselves why they are interesting or important. They may even claim that technology alone is a sufficient explanation for the course of naval history: "The evolution of a Navy is dictated, and thus explained, by the increase in the power of its guns."[20] Such claims do not recommend technical history to the trained historian, and yet in this subject it is absolutely indispensable. No historian will make much contribution to naval history who dismisses technical knowledge as antiquarian enthusiasm. One of the most

[18] Two recent articles on the same campaign illustrate the point: C.M. Gillmor, "Naval Logistics of the Cross-Channel Operation, 1066," in R. Allen Brown, ed., *Anglo-Norman Studies VII: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1984.* (Woodbridge: 1985), pp. 105-131; and Christine and Gerald Grainge, "The Pevensey Expedition: Brilliantly Executed Plan or Near Disaster?," *Mariner's Mirror*, LXXIX (1993) pp. 261-273. Gillmor is painfully ignorant of the sea, the Grainges offer the yachtsman's view of the eleventh century; both fall into strange errors.

[19] Boris Rankov, "Reconstructing the Past: The Operation of the Trireme Reconstruction *Olympias* in the Light of the Historical Sources," *Mariner's Mirror*, LXXX (1994) pp. 131-146.

[20] Jean Boudriot, *The History of the French Frigate, 1650-1850*, translated by David H. Roberts (Rotherfield, East Sussex: Jean Boudriot Publications, 1993), p. 282.

encouraging signs of renaissance in the subject is a consciousness on both sides of this divide that it needs to be bridged. It is too soon to say that it has disappeared, but for the good of the subject it ought to, and anyone who tackles naval history has got to be prepared to link the technical and the general. It is encouraging that so much good technical history about ships and weapons has been published in recent years,[21] advancing our knowledge enormously, and making it possible for the technically illiterate to acquire the essentials of the subject. The importance of mastering the technology of naval history runs well beyond naval history itself. Only when naval historians have mastered this essential aspect of their subject will they be properly equipped to convey its importance to non-specialists. For want of technical literacy, historians of other disciplines can and do fall into serious errors in treating of maritime affairs,[22] and it is the business of the naval historian to be able to correct them.

There is, however, much more to writing any overview of naval history than integrating and explaining complex technologies. Naval history of its nature touches on many areas of national history which are commonly studied separately. Anyone who wants to write the history of a navy, still more the naval history of a country, must be able to explain the naval influence on, or contribution to, political, social, economic, diplomatic and of course military history. It is idle to study the social history of seafaring in ignorance of social history at large.[23] So much is obvious, but the converse is true as well, and we are still some way from demonstrating to social historians that their subject is incomplete so long as it excludes one of the largest and most distinctive occupations. Economic, colonial and imperial historians, keenly interested in the linked debates on how and why the European empires rose and fell, and to whose profit, cannot and do not ignore the role of sea power, but it is characteristic and deplorable that their work has not much influenced naval historians. Those who should be most interested in the question of what navies achieved and how, are not always familiar with the theories of, for instance, Frederic Lane or Niels Steensgaard. A considerable body of research[24] now exists on the relations of government economic and fiscal policy, economic growth, foreign trade and naval power, but it has not yet been integrated into naval history as it should. Among the economic historians, for example, the origins of the industrial revolution have

[21] Notably by such authors as Brian Lavery, Peter Goodwin, Jean Boudriot, Frank Fox, John Harland, Robert Gardiner, James Lees, D.K. Brown, Andrew Lambert and Norman Friedman.

[22] An example is treated by myself in "Cnut's Geld and the size of Danish Warships,"*English Historical Review*, cx (1995) pp. 392-403.

[23] Hence the value of such works as Anthony Carew's *The Lower Deck of the Royal Navy 1900-39: Invergordon in Perspective* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), or Bernard Capp's *Cromwell's Navy: The Fleet and the English Revolution 1648-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Historians of trades-unions or radical social movements may not be able to tell us everything about life at sea, but they can tell us a great deal which conventional naval historians have hitherto missed.

[24] Notably by Patrick O'Brian, John Brewer and James C. Riley.

long been a matter of debate. One of the critical issues is the role of capital: how much was needed, when, and where, and whence did it come? It seems to be clear that the colonial trades, especially from the West and East Indies, were crucial generators of liquid capital for investment elsewhere. It is less clear that the availability of this capital was essential to industrial development, but it certainly supplied the credit structure which supported the British war effort.

This credit structure has itself been identified by James C.Riley as one of the foundations of British superiority over France, and his (admittedly technical) works on the operation of international capital markets[25] ought to be invoked early in any discussion of the ingredients of naval power. There is much still to debate, but the relevance of colonial trade and forms of government debt to sea power are obvious, and naval historians should be participating fully in the discussion. It is to be feared that not all of them are conscious that it is going on. Nor are the economic historians always as aware as they might be of the significance of naval history to their work. A good case can be made that chronic indebtedness resulting from unsustainable naval expansion was the fundamental (as distinct from precipitating) factor in the decline of the Dutch in the early eighteenth century, and the collapse of the old regimes of France in 1789, Germany in 1918, and the Soviet Union in the 1990s, but the point is not often noticed.

Similar comments might be made of political history. Though naval strength has been a prominent political issue in Britain since the fourteenth century at latest, naval history still tends to shy away from discussing politics, without which there is no possibility of explaining the formation of naval policy and strategy, and indeed many other aspects of naval history. We cannot, for example, analyze the reputation of Lord Howe before and after the battle of the 1st June 1794 without recalling that he was a survivor of a generation of senior officers who had split the fleet on political lines, that as First Lord of the Admiralty in 1788 his handling of promotions had aroused such fury that attempts were made to impeach him, and that as commander-in-chief in 1790 he had been extremely unpopular.[26] It is equally unrealistic to describe the course of high politics with no reference to the Navy at many critical points in history, such as the installation of Edward IV, the rise and fall of the English republic, and the revolution of 1688. The illusion is widespread that the sea has insulated Britain from invasion. In fact English or Scottish regimes have been overthrown by seaborne invasions at least ten times since the Norman Conquest,[27] besides at least eight other

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[25]   *International Government Finance and the Amsterdam Capital Market, 1740-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), and *The Seven Years War and the Old Regime in France: The Economic and Financial Toll* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

[26]   N.A.M. Rodger, *The Insatiable Earl: A Life of John Montagu, Fourth Earl of Sandwich 1718-1792* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), pp. 254-255 and 308-309.

[27]   In 1139, 1153, 1326, 1332, 1399, 1460, 1470, 1471, 1485 and 1688.

successful landings of major forces.[28] These figures take no account of lesser raids and landings, they ignore all expeditions which did not succeed in putting troops ashore, and they do not include landings in Ireland. This does not altogether justify political historians in overlooking the threat of invasion, nor naval historians in overlooking the fact of it. In more recent periods when enemy landings have been avoided, naval policy has continued to be a central theme in high politics, and an indispensable study for anyone interested in explaining the course of naval policy. It is impossible to explain British naval strength in the eighteenth century, for example, without understanding why the varied ideologies of Whigs and Tories, Havoverians and Jacobites, King's Friends and Patriots, led all of them for different reasons to support a strong navy. Conversely, historians of political ideas can hardly describe their subject fully without reference to national defence, always the most expensive and difficult of any government's responsibilities.[29]

Similar comments could be made about a wide range of historical specialties which need to be integrated with naval history. Industrial history cannot be written without reference to the dockyards, until recently the largest and most complex industrial enterprises in the world, and the first to adopt machine tools. There is a crucial relationship, still very ill-explored, between the development of the blast-furnace and of iron founding technology, and the adoption of iron guns at sea. Architectural history requires reference to dockyard buildings, pioneers in several building and civil engineering techniques, notably wide-span iron roofs.[30] The religious history of the Navy is important not only as an aspect of religious and social history in general, but for its impact on many other aspects of naval affairs. It is, for instance, quite unrealistic to discuss the Royal Navy's failure to profit from Arthur Pollen's revolutionary fire-control equipment,[31] without mentioning that Pollen belonged to a prominent Roman Catholic family in an age when most naval officers were strongly anti-Catholic. Even sartorial history ought to notice that most men and many women throughout the world are now dressed as eighteenth-century sailors. In all these and many other areas, the naval historian has to be aware of what other historians are writing if he is to do justice to his own subject, and explain its importance to others. To do so he has to integrate a wide range of knowledge. It goes without saying that this demands a great deal of reading and not inconsiderable literary

[28]   In 1069, 1101, 1215, 1405, 1462, 1469, 1487 and 1708.

[29]   Bernard Semmel's *Liberalism and Naval Strategy: Ideology, Interest and Sea Power during the Pax Britannica* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1986), for example, is a valuable book which interprets its subject in such a way as to avoid discussing either naval strategy or sea power.

[30]   Jonathan G. Coad, *The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850: Architecture and Engineering Works of the Sailing Navy* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1989) pp. 114-117 & 230-233.

[31]   Jon T. Sumida, *In Defence of Naval Supremacy: Finance, Technology and British Naval Policy 1889-1914* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1989).

skills, so it is not surprising that successful naval histories which take this approach are very rare.

It could even be argued that successful navies and successful naval historians both possess a high level of managerial skill. Navies do not simply depend on one or two complex technologies; they have to combine a very wide range of skills and trades, ashore and afloat, into an efficient whole. Failure in any one of these, or failure to connect them all into an effective machine, will nullify any amount of excellence in the individual parts. For the historian the problem is equally in making a coherent narrative out of so wide a range of material. Clearly naval history is not the totality of national history, yet it bears more or less on a large fraction of that totality. To make the necessary connections, to demonstrate the relevance of naval to national history and vice versa, is not easy. It demands considerable organizational and literary discipline to keep so wide a range and so large a volume of material under control.

For the British historian, moreover, the very concept of national history involves subtleties and complications which have not yet been much recognized in naval history. In countries which have been thoroughly overtaken by the idea of the nation-state, it is possible (though not necessarily helpful) for historians to assume that nation and state are identical. In Britain, a survivor of the older ideal of the supranational monarchy, the naval historian has to decide whose naval history he is writing. Even in the modern era, and *a fortiori* in a history which reaches back into the Dark Ages, it is no longer acceptable to treat Britain and England as equivalent terms. A naval history of Britain has to be a naval history of its constituent parts, a Scottish, Irish and Welsh naval history as well as an English one. Moreover it is not possible to study the naval history of the British Isles, especially in the early Middle Ages, without being struck by the conviction that there never was anything inevitable about a unitary state of Great Britain, dominated by England. Such a state existed in embryo in the tenth century, and it collapsed as a result of foreign invasion, leaving the British Isles partitioned, and England incorporated into two foreign empires in succession; first the Danish, then the Norman-Angevin. It was English naval failure which led to this conquest and collapse, and it was English naval weakness which kept the British Isles divided for seven hundred years.

National histories and naval history are aspects of one another; to write naval history purely in English terms is not merely inadequate but impossible. This fact might be better understood if the naval history of the Middle Ages had been attempted before. In fact the last attempt at a comprehensive and scholarly naval history of even a part of the period was published in 1847.[32] As a result, a period in which three successive English overseas empires rose and fell, and in which much of the British Isles was for longer or shorter periods incorporated into

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[32] Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas, *A History of the Royal Navy* (London: Colbourn, 1847) 2 volumes. It has very little before 1066 and nothing after 1422.

foreign empires—empires necessarily based on sea power, or at least sea communications—has been ignored by naval historians, and treated by other historians virtually without any reference to the sea. Inadequate as much existing naval history is, the historian of, say, the eighteenth century can hardly ignore it altogether. The medieval historian can, and does. Here the professional challenge to the naval historian is to master the sources for a period which is apt to appear formidable to the beginner. At bottom the difficulty is much the same as that of technical history; it is no harder to master medieval Latin hands than it is to understand the workings of a steam engine or a radar set, and any scholar of common intelligence and application ought to be capable of making a useful contribution to the subject. The prize is a valuable one, for it is not only medieval history which will appear in a very different light when we have studied the period when England was an overseas colony ruled from Lund or Fontevrauld, and when the English were the victims of the international slave trade.

The study of medieval naval history is valuable, moreover, not only in itself, but because it forcibly divests the historian of anachronistic nationalism. It is not easy for even the least sensitive scholar to write of 'English' naval history in a period when the greatest 'English' naval base was Bayonne, and when 'English' fleets could be manned by men speaking Basque, Italian, Gascon and Gaelic.[33]

The same consciousness has to be extended into more modern periods when it makes better sense to think in terms of national history, for there can be no history less intelligible in narrowly nationalistic terms than the history of the sea. Naval history, like all maritime history, is of its essence the history of interaction between peoples. It cannot be written properly from the records of one country alone, or from books in only one language. Yet in actual practice it is uncommon to read a work of naval history whose author has really attempted to assimilate the history of other navies or other countries, let alone read works on his own country's history written in foreign languages, or explored foreign archives. When the attempt is made it sometimes inspires the thought that few things cross frontiers more slowly than a reading list. It is impossible to write any general naval history of Britain without being able to read the common scholarly tongues of Europe. Latin, French, German, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian are evidently indispensable; Catalan, Arabic, Turkish, Russian and the Scandinavian languages highly desirable, to which the historian of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will want to add Chinese and Japanese. There are not many naval historians who can deploy all these, certainly not myself, and yet we have got to accept that is what is necessary to do the job properly.

In the end we come to a simple, almost banal observation: to write a broad history over a long period the historian has to have broad knowledge. He has

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[33] In the later stages of the Scottish War of Independence, Edward II's squadrons in the Irish Sea included ships of Bayonne, Genoa, Bordeaux and the Western Isles, besides many ports in England, Wales and Ireland.

to have the ability, and of course the time, to read very widely, in many languages. He must have access to foreign archives and foreign books. He needs the organizational and literary skills to assimilate and present the fruits of his research. In naval history it almost always is "he", which perhaps is one reason why so few authors match, or even approach, these demands. What is needed is not only some ability and experience, but good fortune as well. Like the good general, the good historian needs luck, the luck of time and money for many years' work, and such luck is not given to many scholars inside or outside universities these days. Above all, he needs a certain sober boldness. Surveying with well-informed and realistic eye the difficulties of the undertaking, and the formidable range and depth of skills required to meet it, he will appreciate just how far his own abilities fall short of the ideal. Yet if every scholar is deterred by the difficulties, the task will never be undertaken. Somebody has to be prepared to run risks. A general naval history would be a prize of great value, and if the first person to attempt it should fail altogether, he may still have the merit of stimulating other and better scholars to achieve it.

Chapter 9
Toward a "New" Naval History

Dennis E. Showalter

To speak of naval history as becalmed may be an exaggeration. Dr. Nicholas Rodger, however, certainly describes the need for a leadsman in the bow as the discipline navigates shoal waters. For three decades the "new military history" has dominated land-warfare studies to a point where the approach has become quite middle-aged. Students of air power, with some notable exceptions, have correspondingly accepted a broader view of their subject.[1] Dr. Rodger, on the other hand, demonstrates trenchantly and cogently that "new naval history" remains an unfortunate oxymoron.

In explaining the problem of writing naval history, Rodger focusses on naval historians. He describes authors who use national characteristics to explain operational performance, who either lack technical knowledge or take antiquarians' approaches to details of warship design and weapons systems, who treat their subject in isolation from the social, economic, and even architectural factors that provide the matrices of naval warfare. His final challenge, calling for at least reading knowledge of over a dozen languages, will surely daunt the most ambitious of scholars. It is no less legitimate for being intimidating.

It is possible as well to approach the problem of writing naval history in a structural context. Two principal factors have combined to create the pattern established in Rodger's essay. The first is ethnic. Modern naval history is not merely Anglophone; it is Anglocentric. Its dominant practitioners are either British by heritage or adoption, or U.S. scholars influenced by British frames of reference. Naval histories of other countries, France, Japan, Italy, tend to be written on British models.[2] Germany offers a significant exception, but the approach associated with scholars like Volker Berghahn and Wilhelm Deist has been seriously challenged in recent years, and by no means dominated the subject even in its heyday during the 1970s. The same point can be made about theorists. Rodger mentions Wolfgang Wegener and R.V.P. Castex as strategic thinkers who remain unknown outside academic circles, and were virtually ignored in

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[1] The best illustration of this development is the anthology edited by Horst Boog, *The Conduct of the Air War in the Second World War: An International Comparison* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[2] Cf. for example James J. Sadkovich, *The Italian Navy in World War II* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994) or Friedrich Ruge, *Der Seekrieg 1939 bis 1945*, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart: K.F. Koehler, 1962).

their own milieux as well. Alfred Thayer Mahan may have been a U.S. citizen, but his mind, and arguably his soul, were as "British" when it came to questions of sea power as any admiral of the "Queen's Navee."[3] In a broader context the geopolitical conception of a Eurasian "heartland" whose control is the key to world power found little resonance among naval scholars even during its heyday in the period between the World Wars. The subsequent experiences of Nazi Germany and the former USSR are frequently cited as *prima facie* evidence of the model's inadequacy in practical terms.[4]

The general acceptance of the British approach to naval history owes much to British naval successes. Whatever its specific ups and downs between the Dutch Wars and Napoleon's final exile, the Royal Navy in 1815 bestrode the world like a colossus. Frederick the Great was as accurate as he was cynical in asserting that history is written by winners. Doctrine tends as well to be established either in imitation of or reaction to the last war's victors. The *Jeune École* of the late nineteenth century had principled adherents. Yet even in France, its country of origin, high-tech *guerre de course* was widely regarded as a solution *faute de mieux*.[5]

The Royal Navy's physical ascendancy, moreover, overlapped the emergence of history as an academic discipline. Scholars seeking topics found rich sources in the records of one of the era's most heavily-bureaucratized institutions. They also found ready to hand a theoretical debate that has continued ever since to shape naval history. Medieval England had no naval strategy to speak of, especially compared to the state's conduct of land warfare. Neither did Scotland. Far from being a protection, the English Channel was a highway for at least sixteen major invasions between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries. Queen Elizabeth's navy was a defensive force, not an instrument of power projection.[6]

Beginning in the mid-1600s, however, English political and naval planners began integrating four points previously considered in isolation into a single concept. Continental Europe was developing an essentially stable balance of power sustained by standing armies. Such armies were viewed across the channel as expensive and threatening to the "liberties of Englishmen."[7] Nor could they

[3] Philip A. Crowl, "Alfred Thayer Mahan: The Naval Historian," in Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 444-477.

[4] Paul Kennedy, "Mahan versus Mackinder," in *Strategy and Diplomacy, 1870-1945* (London: Fontana paperback, 1984), pp. 41-86. The chapter on geopolitics in Edward M. Earle, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943) was omitted entirely from the revised edition of 1986, edited by Peter Paret.

[5] Volkmar Bueb, *Die "Junge Schule" der französischen Marine.. Strategie und Politik 1875-1900*, (Boppard am Rhein: Boldt, 1971).

[6] David Loades, *The Tudor Navy: An Administrative, Political and Military History* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1992); and Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 99-100.

[7] Lois G. Schwoerer, *"No Standing Armies!" The Antimilitary Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974).

win decisive victories against their essentially-similar opponents. Therefore England could best serve her own and Europe's interests by participating in coalitions against over-ambitious states like the France of Louis XIV. Such participation would best involve disrupting the enemy's maritime trade—an increasingly-important point in the Age of Mercantilism—and using sea power as a force multiplier for the state's limited land forces. Raids and "descents" were almost as important to this strategy of "alliance, encirclement, and attrition" as the contingents assigned to the coalition forces that confronted France in the cockpit of the Low Countries.[8]

From its inception this approach was challenged by the argument that its success depended on continental allies willing to accept—or unable to avoid—the military effort necessary to complement the effect of Britain's wooden walls. But in a context of "perfect states," whose rulers owed allegiance neither upwards nor downwards and were able to conduct foreign policy in what amounted to a vacuum, Britain's self-defined role as paymaster and purveyor to a series of Grand Alliances gave the blue-water strategy a credibility it arguably lost in the middle third of the nineteenth century when conscript armies and comprehensive railroad systems diminished the capacity of Britain to intervene militarily in Europe and the objective value of that intervention.[9] At the same time the absence of any serious rival altered the Royal Navy's actual role from a cutting-edge instrument of great-power politics to something prefiguring Starfleet in the popular television series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*: a police force exercising gunboat diplomacy, often in the name of an international community perfectly willing to shelter beneath the British umbrella.[10]

The Royal Navy and its historians were saved from this seemingly-inglorious fate by Alfred Thayer Mahan. To the concept of blue-water strategy Mahan grafted that of the decisive battle—a combination making his theories particularly attractive to Britain's embryonic maritime rivals, Germany and the U.S. Instead of playing the British game of attrition, a stacked deck at the turn of the century in view of Britain's geostrategic position, the rising maritime powers could aim for a decisive action, overthrowing their prospective adversaries in a single afternoon in the fashion of Napoleon or Moltke the Elder. In Imperial Germany, a risk navy evolved into a challenge navy. A United States whose overseas

8 The best overview of this complex subject is Robert D. McJimsey "Reflections on the Blue-water Strategy from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century," unpublished ms.. Cf. John B. Hattendorf, "Alliance, Encirclement and Attrition: British Grand Strategy in the War of the Spanish Succession" in Paul M. Kennedy, ed., *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 11-30.

9 Cf. Michael Howard, *The Continental Commitment* (London: Temple Smith, 1972); and Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London: Allen Lane, 1976); and Howard's "The World According to Henry," *Foreign Affairs*, LXXIII (1994), p. 138.

10 Raymond C. Howell, *The Royal Navy and the Slave Trade* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), is a solid case study of this development.

holdings were minuscule nevertheless concentrated on developing a battle fleet able to challenge all comers, no matter how unlikely the combinations.[11]

The result has been an intellectual *ciré perdue* process: an acceptance of sea power as a "thing in itself" by other states as the originator of the concept increasingly found itself locked into a continental commitment. The Royal Navy of World War II waged, again *faute de mieux,* a brown-water, coastal war against its principal enemy while Nazi Germany's *Kriegsmarine* projected the construction of a world-striding battle fleet in its Z-Plan.[12] On the other side of the globe, Japan and the U.S. fought a naval war in Mahanian terms—a strategic version of art imitating life.[13] Even the USSR succumbed eventually to the lure of an ocean-going navy—a *fata morgana* whose pursuit contributed its fair share to the Soviet system's eventual economic collapse.

U.S. scholars and strategists in the course of the twentieth century have found the original concept of the blue-water doctrine at least as attractive as its Mahanian modifications. In global terms the U.S. is a geostrategic island, and for most of this century its navy has been used as a power-projection force in much the way the Royal Navy was from the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries. For the U.S., World War I was a "descent" in the classic British model of a commitment not involving the state's total resources, undertaken in the context of an alliance whose other members had already done most of the dirty work.[14] The European Theater of Operations in World War II reflected a similar pattern, with the Soviet Union playing the role of the Austrian Empire and Britain substituting for the Netherlands. In the Pacific, the U.S. Navy evolved into a major combined-arms force, controlling its own land and air forces. At the same time, from Guadalcanal to Okinawa its fiercest battles were fought to support ground operations—a fact highlighted by Admiral Raymond Spruance's decision to eschew seeking a Mahanian victory at the Battle of the Philippine Sea in favor of protecting the Marianas beachheads.[15] During and after the Cold War the U.S. Navy assumed its British predecessor's

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[11] Cf. Holger Herwig, *"Luxury Fleet": The Imperial German Navy 1888-1918* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1980); and George W. Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power. The U.S. Navy, 1890-1990* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

[12] Cf. Corelli Barnett, *Engage the Enemy More Closely: The Royal Navy in the Second World War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991); and Jost Dülffer, *Weimar, Hitler und die Marine: Reichspolitik und Flottenbau 1920 by 1939* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1973), pp. 495 ff.

[13] Dan van der Vat, *The Pacific Campaign, World War II: The U.S.-Japanese Naval War, 1941-1945* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), is a useful recent overview with a strategic-operational focus. Cf. Paul S. Dull, *A Battle History of the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1941-1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1978).

[14] Cf. David Trask, *The AEF and Coalition War-Making* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993); and Robert D. McJimsey, "England's 'Descent' on France and the Origins of the Blue Water Strategy," unpublished ms.

[15] The best discussion of this controversial issue remains Thomas B. Buell, *The Quiet Warrior: A Biography of Admiral Raymond A. Spruance* (Boston: Little Brown, 1974), pp. 257 ff.

role as the front line symbol and guarantor of American power, in the context of a Soviet rival whose throwaway surface-ship designs harked strongly to the *Jeune École*.[16]

British paradigms, in short, fit the U.S. Navy's missions and *mentalité* comfortably enough to discourage any systematic search for alternatives. Works like Kenneth Hagan's *This People's Navy*, critiquing the "insular navy" model in strategic contexts, remain not merely exceptions but anomalies.[17] To establish the point that naval history and naval strategy have to date essentially been defined by paradigms made in Britain is not to deny completely the validity of those paradigms. Colin Gray, in a recent update of the blue-water thesis, makes a compelling case for sea power as an instrument of leverage. It can transport resources to a specific theater of operations. It can protract a conflict and set its terms acting as a barrier to the physical occupation Gray accepts as the ultimate arbiter of any war.[18] This interpretation is a step away from Mahan, but would have found vocal supporters in any Parliament after the Stuart Restoration. The consequence of the position's strength, however, has been to discourage alternate intellectual approaches to the practical questions of sea power and the intellectual problems of writing naval history.

This limitation in turn reinforces the second structural factor shaping the study of naval history. Navies are the most self-referencing of armed forces, and can possess a correspondingly powerful dynamic. Sparta's navy remained marginal because its very existence threatened the balance of Spartan society.[19] Warships are communities in ways army or air force formations are not. In the Middle Ages, sailors were a breed apart. Ship's officers and ordinary seamen shared a broad spectrum of bonds no landsman was seen as able to understand. In the early modern era "tarpaulins" may have given way to "gentlemen" on quarterdecks, but the relationships remained. Not only warrant officers but forecastle hands regularly followed "their" captains from commission to commission in the Georgian navy.[20]

The heritage of community endures even as larger fleets and bureaucratized personnel policies made such direct, comprehensive personal loyalties impossible.

[16] Michael T. Isenberg, *Shield of the Republic. The United States Navy in an Era of Cold War and Violent Peace, 1945-1962* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993). Cf. Bradley F. Klein, "Hegemony and Strategic Culture: American Power Projection and Alliance Defense Politics," *Review of International Studies*, XIV (April 1988), pp. 38-48.

[17] Kenneth Hagan, *This People's Navy. The Making of American Sea Power* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

[18] Colin Gray, *The Leverage of Sea Power. The Strategic Advantage of Navies in War* (New York: Free Press, 1992), pp. 278 ff.

[19] Caroline Falkner, "Sparta and the Sea: A History of Spartan Sea-Power C. 706-C.373 B.C.," PhD Dissertation, University of Alberta, 1993.

[20] N.A.M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (London: Collins, 1986). Cf. Jaap R. Bruijn, *The Dutch Navy of the Sixteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1993).

It endures not least because a warship's crew shares its fate in common. An infantryman can find a convenient hiding place and report to whatever remains of his unit once the fighting dies down. A sailor has no such option. A shirker, whatever his reasons, has no place to hide and no way to mask the loss of his place as a man among men—which is why, perhaps, crew morale in the Age of Fighting Sail tended to collapse all at once rather than by degrees. Common behavior is less shameful behavior. As much to the point, senior officers, even the most senior, share identical risks. Tromp, Nelson, Beatty, Jellicoe—all rode their flagships into battle. Not until World War II did it become possible, and arguably preferable, for admirals to control operations from land-based communication centers. But if Karl Dönitz and Chester Nimitz did not lead their fleets in person, the same cannot be said for Spruance, Halsey, Sir Bruce Fraser, and Gunther Lütgens. Nor did the new style of command receive universal approbation. The disgruntled commander of a German destroyer flotilla in Norway in 1943 grumbled that "we had hundreds of admirals on land, and only one at sea."[21]

One result is that the problem of "abstraction" in writing military history described by John Keegan has had significantly less impact on the conceptualizing of operational naval history. When everyone is literally in the same boat, even retrospective intellectual approaches are likely to be highly personal; and scholars tend to take their cues from their sources. The particularization of naval history, in other words, reflects the nature of naval combat.

A second reason for the self-referencing nature of navies is their developing role as symbols of the states to which they belong. In its context Nicholas Rodger shows the way by his statement that warships involve the most advanced and complex technologies of their eras. The Athenian trireme, the eighteenth-century ship of the line, the modern super-carrier—each epitomizes the achievements of the cultures that produced them. Their names reflect a state's geography, its history, and the spiritual qualities it considers valuable. Warships are indeed, in the words of Robert O'Connell, "sacred vessels" whose expendability not infrequently reflects moral as well as operational considerations.[22] The British Army could suffer 60,000 casualties in a single day, but Jellicoe could have lost Britain's war in an afternoon. Given that context it is understandable that much naval writing is not only national in focus, but reflects particular national mythologies in ways military history does not. And icons are seldom noted for humility.

Naval solipsism has been reinforced by a third factor: the emergence of professionalism. Arguably as early as the seventeenth century, certainly by the

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21   Rolf Johannesson, quoted in J. Steinhoff, et. al., eds. *Voices From the Third Reich: An Oral History*, ed. (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1989), p. 178.

22   Robert L. O'Connell. *Sacred Vessels: The Cult of the Battleship and the Rise of the U.S. Navy* (Boulder: Westview, 1991).

eighteenth, navies began a steady process of evolution away from the "seafaring" model both socially and technically. As late as the Revolutionary/-Napoleonic era the differences between a merchant sailor and a man o' war's man were largely situational. By 1914, on the other hand, every major navy accepted the premise that sailors and officers were best shaped by training rather than experience. Navies correspondingly evolved as bureaucratic and military organizations, relating to other, similar organizations. Only recently has the process of reintegrating navies into general maritime history recommenced.[23]

A fourth point contributing to the self-referencing nature of naval writing is that navies themselves tend to be symmetrical, at least in general terms. This in good part reflects the nature of the medium in which they operate. The world's oceans imposed their own constraints on ship design, particularly before the introduction of steam technology. The oared galleys that dominated the Mediterranean for two millennia did not transplant well to the English Channel or the North Sea.[24] On the other hand the large and clumsy gunships constructed by the northern maritime powers in the sixteenth and seventeenth century could not operate effectively outside their own waters. The eventual result was the development of the general purpose warship: a process of evolution beginning with the Spanish and Portuguese galleons and culminating in the fleets of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic era whose ship designs, from the humble cutters and gun-brigs to the majestic three-deckers, were essentially similar. French naval architects on the whole produced ships of the line individually better than their British counterparts. The U.S., with a small navy, favored individual ships powerful enough to dominate any one-on-one contest. It remains, however, difficult for any but the experts to tell at a glance a French frigate from its British, Dutch, or Spanish counterpart.

Asymmetry was not inevitably a recipe for disaster. In the early sixteenth century Asian and Middle Eastern states saw Europeans win an empire by guns and sails. Within fifty years, however, Muslim flotillas of small, shallow-draft vessels were able to overcome European-style gunships even in the open sea. Nevertheless it is unusual for a state with great-power pretensions to choose to construct a navy essentially different from those of its rivals. The Muslim states of Indonesia, for example, constructed ocean-going ships as western models as early as the 1560s, and were increasingly able to fight their European counterparts on even terms.[25] In the 1840s and 50s France experimented with alternate force structures based on new combinations of technologies: shell guns, steam power,

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[23] See particularly John Hattendorf, ed., *Ubi Sumus?: The State of Naval and Maritime History* (Newport: Naval War College Press, 1994).

[24] John F. Guilmartin, *Gunpowder and Galleys. Changing Technology and Mediterranean Warfare at Sea in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), remains the standard account.

[25] Carlo M. Cipolla, *Guns, Sails and Empires* (New York: Minerva Press, 1965); and Parker, *Military Revolution*, pp. 105 ff.

and armor plate. Britain first reacted, then took the lead in these fields.[26] Thomas Jefferson's gunboats, the torpedo vessels of France's *Jeune École*, and the fast attack craft that formed the backbone of Soviet Russia's surface fleet from the 1950s to the 1970s each represented conscious efforts to establish a paradigm shift in the definition of naval power.[27] In each case the states involved ultimately abandoned the effort as unprofitable. The balances between Britain and Germany prior to World War I and France and Italy in the 1930s are more typical. It is anomalous for a sea power to maintain a force structure essentially different from its neighbors' by choice, as opposed to weakness—usually financial.

The symmetrical character of navies in turn encourages concentration on details of tactics and technology. Nuances acquire special importance when like engages like on land, in the air, and particularly at sea. Concentration on these nuances correspondingly handicaps that search for a broader perspective Professor Rodger urges in his essay. The relative neglect of relevant primary sources in naval history stressed by Jon Sumida and David Rosenberg exacerbates the problem from a different angle. How much must scholars know before they can responsibly consider writing comprehensive studies even of particular aspects of this subject?

Navies do not exist in vacuums, even though their historians sometimes act as if that were the case. Operationally they depend on bases. Even with modern fleet trains and nuclear power, human and material factors limit the time warships can spend at sea. Economically, navies continue to concentrate public resources in a highly-visible fashion. Socially, navies both establish and expand parameters even for individuals. Joining the Navy to see the world is a concept almost as attractive in the information-saturated 1990s as it was during the author's midwestern adolescence four decades earlier.

Yet despite the comprehensive integration of naval forces into wider systems, naval history tends to remain a thing in itself, written in paradigms structured by nationalism and shaped by navies' self-referencing nature. Nicholas Rodger cogently analyzes the ways *individual* historians can break their matrices. What can be done to challenge the *structural* constraints described in the present essay? A useful and obvious beginning involves encouraging a "new naval history" that recognizes the pivotal military and moral place of navies in the states that create and sustain them. This process is well under way. As yet, however, this form of naval history is still at the maritime equivalent of the stage Allan Millett describes as "struggling through the wire."

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[26] C.I. Hamilton, *Anglo-French Naval Rivalry 1840-1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[27] Spencer C. Tucker, *The Jeffersonian Gunboat Navy* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), is a particularly stimulating reinterpretation of the first of these examples. Cf. Ray Walsen, *France's Search for a Battle Fleet: Naval Policy and Naval Power* (New York: Garland, 1992); and Robert Herrick, *Soviet Naval Theory and Policy: Gorshkov's Inheritance* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1988).

A parallel process involves taking advantage of navies' symmetry to establish comparative models that cross political boundaries. Arthur Marder's work on Anglo-Japanese naval connections comes readily to mind. The model established by Robert O'Connell in *Sacred Vessels* invites extension in both space and time. What factors make a particular warship design "sacred" at a specific time and place? What is the comparative fate of heretics? Does the "religion" fade away slowly, or alter in a paradigm shift along the lines suggested by Thomas Kuhn? Does it exist in reality as opposed to mythology? The British government and the Royal Navy, for example, seemed willing if not necessarily eager to abandon the cult of the battleship by the 1920s.[28]

Another approach to naval history as a concept involves determining and balancing navies as institutions with navies as communities. Current emphasis on evaluating navies in structural terms must not obscure the fact that a fleet is not merely an organization. Executives caught in mergers tend to look to their own golden parachutes. This is a logical, perhaps a necessary, consequence of modern industrial economies. It is also an absolute contrast to the ethos best expressed in the words of Admiral Aubrey Fitch to the captain of the sinking *U.S.S. Lexington* in the Battle of the Coral Sea: "Well, Ted, let's get the men off."

The specific concept of naval community has broader societal implications as well. What Paul Kennedy calls a "ship's culture" creates general models of behavior and attitude stressing group identity as well as group loyalty. Mavericks are a greater irritant in a wardroom than an officers' mess, simply because they are more difficult to avoid politely. To what extent does this culture persist even in modern navies, where increasingly-high percentages of senior officers spend increasingly little time afloat? The marginalization of A.H. Pollen in Britain and Hyman Rickover in the U.S. invite comparative analysis in this context.[29] Navies also offer a significant—and neglected—source of material to contemporary students of the problem of developing a consciousness of community in increasingly entropic societies.[30]

Thus far my proposals have been conventional—the kinds of things a promising graduate student might expect to hear from an advisor. A second approach to writing general naval history involves establishing an alternative to the "British" blue-water model that I have argued continues to dominate thoughts and emotions on the subject. Nicholas Rodger has argued its limitations

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[28] R.C. Gamble, "Decline of the Dreadnought: Britain and the Washington Naval Conference, 1921-1922," PhD Dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 1993.

[29] Cf. Jon Sumida, ed., *The Pollen Papers: The Privately Circulated Printed Works of Arthur Hungerford Pollen, 1901-1916* (London: Navy Records Society, 1984); and Theodore Rockwell, *The Rickover Effect: How One Man Made a Difference* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1992).

[30] On this subject generally see Amitai Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities, and the Communitarian Agenda* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993).

even in an English context. It is ironic that medieval England maintained a continental position without a navy, but abandoned that strategy almost concurrently with developing a dominant battle fleet. Considered comparatively, Britain's circumstances are unique. The differences between the naval experiences of Great Britain and the U.S. have already been discussed. Japan, the state that most directly copied the Royal Navy, pursued at least since the 1890s a national strategy depending on the direct extension of Japanese power onto the Asian mainland.[31] Japan's "blue water" enemy, the U.S., was acquired in a fit of strategic absent-mindedness, arguably by both sides. Until at least the early 1930s the potential adversaries' principal operational problem was getting close enough to each other to fight a Mahanian battle. As late as 1943, when the rival navies clashed off Guadalcanal, they did so at fingers' ends.[32]

The dominant historical model of naval forces has involved choices. Sea powers as a general rule have as well extensive land frontiers continental commitments that cannot be avoided, that hugely expensive, and that are ultimately crucial to a system's survival in a way fleets are not. The Athenian fleet depended ultimately on Athens's walls for its security and survival, and Athens proved unable to maintain its position as a city fortress defending itself passively against the armies of its Peloponnesian rivals. By the eighteenth century, the Dutch Republic was spending four times as much on its army as its navy.[33] From Louis XIV to Charles de Gaulle, France's geostrategic position has been Janus-faced, simultaneously looking outward to Africa, Asia and North America and inward to Austria and Germany.

Nor have even the wealthiest and most cohesive states been able to sustain simultaneously a dominant army and a preeminent navy. Balance-of-power politics and, to paraphrase Paul Kennedy, "military overstretch" compelled hard choices for democratic Athens, Imperial Germany, and Cold War America, whose dual predominance was as fortuitous as it was temporary and as costly as it was effective.

In this context a plausible approach to writing general naval history involves addressing systematically and comparatively the problem of choice in state policy, strategic planning, and force structures. Here the skills of the historian and the political scientist might well converge, each building on the more specialized work done in the earlier stages of creating a "new naval history." The synthesis produced by this approach, will be unique in the discipline of military history by being true syntheses, reflecting the networks of common points of common points discussed earlier that make navies symmetrical as well as self-referencing.

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[31] Though not without conflict. See F.R. Dickinson, "World War I and Japan: The Dissipation of Consensual Continentalism, 1914-1919," PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1993.

[32] Cf. Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991); and Richard B. Frank, *Guadalcanal* (New York: Random House, 1990).

[33] Bruijn, *Dutch Navy*, p. 216.

If Nicholas Rodger's call to individual excellence is combined with this essay's focus on structural consideration, the results may well resemble those in mountaineering since the 1930s, as human virtuosity began combining with state-of-the-art tools in scaling forces hitherto deemed insurmountable.

PART V
Reflections

Chapter 10

Levels of Approach and Contexts in Naval History:
Admiral Tirpitz and the Origins of Fascism

Paul M. Kennedy

This volume of essays, as I see it, is about historical methodology, about *levels* of approach, and also about the *contexts* within which one can study naval history. I use the words "levels" and "contexts" in the plural sense because I believe there is no single, orthodox way of doing naval history. Indeed, the very purpose of bringing out this collection is to articulate some very different approaches and schools of thought. In organizing this second Yale-Naval War College conference in June 1994, John Hattendorf, Mark Shulman and I wanted those differences described, criticized, defended—and compared. We wanted to see what was special about, or particular to, the study of naval history; and we also wanted to know how it related to military history more generally, and to the discipline of history itself. We wondered if there could be constructed some more "total" way of studying the subject. Finally, we wanted people who were *outside* a history department to look at what we historians are doing, and to offer thoughts on our methodologies, our levels of approach, and our contextual treatments of naval history: hence, our delight when political scientists Robert Jervis, William Thompson and Robert Wood accepted, no doubt with some bemusement, the invitation to contribute.

In the first Yale-Naval War College conference in June 1993, we put the simple question, "Who is doing naval history and where?"[1] In this volume, the question really is, "What sort of naval history is being done, and *should* be done?" It seems to me, in looking at the historiography of nineteenth and twentieth-century naval history, including very recent writings, the field is strangely uneven.

Naval historians have been pretty good at naval policy and strategy, because that is what might be called the "high politics" of naval history, and because the Admiralty, Cabinet and C.I.D. records, and their American and German

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[1] The proceedings of this conference are published with additional essays in John B. Hattendorf, ed., *Ubi Sumus?: The State of Naval and Maritime History* (Newport: Naval War College Press, 1994).

equivalents, are so accessible. This does not mean that our interpretations of naval policy are unanimous and uncontroversial. One of the more interesting developments in recent years has been the way in which Jon Sumida and now Nicholas Lambert are reinterpreting what some regard as the "Arthur Marder period" of pre-1914 British naval policy. They, in particular, have been and are actively involved in that advanced *level* of historical recovery.

On the other hand, we are behind-hand, but getting better, in the critically important field of understanding how navies, as complex and mammoth organizations, really functioned: how they were built, supplied, refueled, repaired, how they adopted new technology, how they recruited and trained their personnel, how they were financed. This is real *grunt* work, involving years of research in the archives on records that deal with some of the "non-high-politics" aspects of naval administration.[2] One simply does not understand the course of the Battle of the Atlantic until one understands shipping and shipbuilding policies, but to many that seems much less romantic than retelling the tale of "Sink the Bismarck."

We, as naval historians, are *not* very good at a "history from below" approach to modern naval history; we have no twentieth-century equivalent to Nicholas Rodger's *The Wooden World*;[3] and there is little or nothing on what might be called "the face of battle" approach, empathetically reconstructing the actions, feelings, habits of ordinary seamen, gunners, petty-officers and the like. Why is there, for example, no counterpart to Craig Cameron's wonderful new study, *American Samurai*,[4] which gets into the mental world of the U.S. marine? Why can't we recover the mental world of the crew of a Grand Fleet battleship or the marine garrison of the Singapore base in the 1930s?

We are reasonably good at writing about relationships between naval policy and domestic politics, partly again because of the sources, partly because of the influence of Volker Berghahn.[5] But there is still a lot to do. There is no really good study, to my mind, of the navalist lobby in twentieth–century Britain, or in the United States for that matter. Those are scarcely unimportant topics.

What is most important here is not the *type* of naval history that an individual scholar does, but that scholars all strive to understand better the relationship between the different approaches, or, perhaps better, between different *levels* of enquiry in naval history. I do not have a fixed model, but it might be possible to approach the subject in the following way: at the bottom level there is the

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[2] See the works of Jon Sumida, in particular, and also of Kevin Smith's very fine dissertation "Anglo-American shipping policies and the crisis of supply in the Second World War." PhD dissertation, Yale, 1990.

[3] N.A.M. Rodger *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (London: Collins, 1986).

[4] Craig Cameron, *American Samurai: Myth, Imagination, and the Conduct of Battle in the First Marine Division, 1941-1951.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[5] Volker R. Berghahn, *Der Tirpitz Plan* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1971).

basic unit, the warship and its crew, one of the levels of historical recovery at which we are not very good. Then there is the larger body, the Channel Fleet or the Pacific Station, parts of the geopolitical jigsaw-puzzle that make up a Great Power's global projections of naval power. Then there is the relationship of naval policy to what the Army and Air Force is doing, to the diplomatic priorities of the country, to its alliance system—a level at which much of our writing has concentrated, and in the process of which becomes less naval history *per se* and more the naval dimension of national strategy, as is the case, for example, with my own *Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*.[6] There is also, perhaps a bit below that level, the research that focuses upon how the creation and procurement of a naval equipment relates to the national economy, to business, to domestic politics, to pressure groups, to propaganda campaigns, in which respect we have produced a mixed bag of results, some striking successes and some glowing gaps. Finally—though you may wish to add to my list—there is the level at which modern naval history relates to general maritime history, or to the overall history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—in which respect we have not yet begun to conceptualize, let alone write anything of substance.

As an example of the various levels, contexts and approaches in naval history, I want to use the theme of "Tirpitz and the Rise of Fascism" to reverse our way of looking at things. I do not want to talk about the "fleet that Tirpitz built," nor the construction programs, the personnel policies, the finances, the operations plans—all of which has been treated by scholars. Rather, I want to turn the telescope around, and peer down the wrong way, and to talk about how a battleship navy fitted into Tirpitz's ideological and political vision, and, more generally, how his vision reflects certain larger changes in European culture as it moved from the nineteenth century into the twentieth.

Naval officers often try to suggest that they are not very political: they are plain, simple fighting men like Jack Aubrey in the Patrick O'Brian novels. Most of us know better than that—the Fishers and Rickovers were intensely political persons, who really rather relished intrigue and maneuvers, and thought they were good at it. But by *political* I do not just mean good at defending one's turf. Tirpitz was a superb bureaucratic in-fighter. I mean that there was also a larger, more profound political and ideological vision—about Germany, about the nature of German society, and about Germany's place in the changing context of world politics—that informed and drove much of what Tirpitz did.

Tirpitz's background is well known. He came from a mid nineteenth-century bourgeois service family—his father was a judge—and he was inculcated with most of the traditional values of that society. Intellectually, he does seem to have been deeply affected by attending Treitschke's lectures on politics at the University of Berlin. This comes out not only in his *Memoirs* but, more reliably,

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[6] Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London: Allen Lane, 1977).

in his private correspondence and comments. Treitschke's nationalistic concept of a specifically German culture unity, of *Deutschtum*, involved an unrelenting and inevitable struggle against other nations and peoples—to modern political scientists, Tirpitz imbibed an out-and-out "realist" interpretation of world affairs. If Germany was not to go under, all Germans *had* to work together, had to have a national cultural understanding of the high stakes involved, and had to understand the way in which modern industry and technology were transforming the German economy and Germany's place in the world. Germany's fast growing industry, trade, wealth made her potentially one of the three or four Great World Powers of the coming Twentieth Century. These factors also increased Germany's dependency upon others, especially upon Britain, unless the Germans were far-sighted enough to create a substantial navy to protect their long-term interests. Although originally a torpedo officer, Tirpitz was fanatic about the concept of the large battleship as the core of naval power, and he really did fight hard against the diversion of funds to cruisers, submarines, even flotillas.

This vision, this program, made him many enemies, as Volker Berghahn, Holger Herwig and other historians have shown: the Army, the East-Elbian Junkers, the Treasury, the more liberal and socialist political parties all opposed him. That he *was* so successful for so long was precisely because he was political. He knew how to find allies, how to orchestrate a navalist press campaign.

What interests me in particular was the intensity of Tirpitz's Social-Darwinian vision, his acute dislike of what he regarded as imported English liberal ideas, and the peculiarity of his love-hate relationship to England (which he shared with many Germans, from Max Weber to the Kaiser). This comes out a little in his official memoranda—for example his 1897 Rominten memorandum to Wilhelm, with its references to rising world Empires, the impetus of economic growth, the stark choice Germany faced of either competing or falling into the second-grade ranks of the nations of the world.

Where one really finds this ideology in his *private* political correspondence, in the Tirpitz papers—which again raised the issue of whether one can *do* naval history based upon the official files alone. And just look at the people with whom he corresponds about this vision of *Deutschtum*: Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the Englishman turned German, whose book[7] was one of the seminal texts for German cultural nationalists; Oswald Spengler, already exchanging ideas with Tirpitz about the differences between a healthy, holistic German *Kultur* and the materialist, atomistic societies of the British and Americans; Dietrich Schäfer, hypernationalist, professor, Pan-German, navalist radical, founder of the German Army League. Almost every luminary of pre-1914, radical right, proto-fascist thought and politics has some connection here. Later on, there is the personal bond to Ludendorf. And it is no surprise that in 1917, a year after Tirpitz was

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[7]   Houston Steward Chamberlain, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, Translated by John Lees from the German, *Grundlagen des Neunzehn Jahrhunderts*. (London: J. Lane, 1910).

dismissed from office, he co-founds the *Vaterlandspartei*, a radical-right party that sought to bring the correct, healthy, firm national policies that Germany needed in its time of external crisis. It is also no surprise that his *Memoirs* are full of bitterness, not so much against the British (who had acted as he had forecast—ruthlessly, concentrated, unwaveringly defending their selfish national interests), but against German weaknesses: disunity, the traitors within, the short-sighted diplomats, the feckless Kaiser. It is no surprise that many regarded Tirpitz as one of the leading right-wing figures of early Weimar Germany, deeply involved in anti-democratic intrigues. Many courted him assiduously, including the early National Socialists, who were eager to obtain his support and approval. This was where his ideological trajectory had taken him. Perhaps his Treitschkean Social-Darwinian ideology had hardened over time, as he became older and more disappointed. Much of his vision had been there, in the 1890s, informing his conception of world politics and Germany's place in it.

How common is this trajectory? How many other European figures, born into nineteenth-century families with a generally Liberal culture in regard to parliamentarism, politics, trade, international relations changed over time to become much more nationalist and proto-fascist? How many British imperialists, like Joseph Chamberlain and Lord Milner, originally began as Liberals? How many Italians, like Mussolini, metamorphosized from Left to Right? As an aside, one wonders whether there were parallels in the American or Japanese experience?

The Liberal creed came under pressure from the rising demands of the working classes, the return of protectionism during the Great Depression, the influence of Bismarck's "blood and iron" policies, the impact of Social-Darwinian and racist thought, the vulgarization of the press, the focus upon imperial conquest and wars, the influence of patriotic pressure groups. The Liberal creed ran out of steam as it entered the twentieth century, losing defectors to the Left, to the newer Socialists, *and* losing to a new Right, less agrarian, aristocratic, conservative, much more radicalized and modern.

It is within this larger European-wide historical context—the swift industrialization, the fears of internal stability, the rise of Germany, the decline of Liberalism, the coming of mass politics, mass education, mass media—that we have to set Tirpitz's unease about Germany's condition, his cultural and ideological preferences and, last but not least, his Tirpitz Plan. If a large, modern battle fleet was, as Mahan and most of the German *Flottenprofessoren* were teaching, *the* power-political instrument necessary for the success of *Deutschtum* in the Great-Power, Darwinian struggle ahead, and if that instrument were to be protected from domestic interference, there really was no alternative. Opponents in the service had to be silenced, the Kaiser's support constantly sought, public opinion constantly cultivated. Diplomatic and strategical changes, like the coming of the Anglo-French *entente* and the stationing of British battle squadrons

in the North Sea, also could not be allowed to affect the Plan. Alternative weapons, such as U-boats and coastal defense expenditures, had to be battled. Only the battle fleet could be what Tirpitz frequently described as the "lever of world politics."

I come back, finally, to the issue of different levels of *approach*, and to *contexts* in naval history. At the largest level, there are the transformations and modernization of European society as the nineteenth century leads into the twentieth. This is accompanied by newer technologies, new forms of communication, social changes, pressures upon existing organizations, political parties, armed services, established religions and much more. There are also changes in the world of ideas and ideologies, as many people begin to question mid-nineteenth century assumptions. At the national level there may be differentiated responses, due to different political cultures, economies, constitutions, even geography, but most countries felt these pressures for change. Within governments and their departments, various transformations also took place, perhaps nowhere more dramatically than in navies because that was where the technological pace of change is fastest, and also because the ideology of imperialism and navalism had pointed to navies as being an integral part of the solution to the challenges posed by the international anarchy and by the propensity to turbulence. Every Great Power in this period, and many a small power, decided that it needed a larger and more powerful fleet. The shipbuilding industries were waiting to supply them.

What *type* of fleet? What mix of ships? What design? What communications systems, what fire control? What type of fuel? Where to base the ships, where to train the personnel? What tactics to practice, what operational and strategical assumptions? How one was to choose the answers to these complex and interrelated questions was an immense problem, not only because this was a period of rapid technological change, but also because there were a variety of viewpoints about naval strategy. Which was best, which most plausibly anticipated the coming conflict, which was consistent with the existing evidence, which seemed to work and which needed to be amended?

It is at this level of analysis—how the naval system really works in practice— that Jon Sumida and Nicholas Lambert and David Rosenberg are doing such wonderful work. We have, to repeat, not got down to the unit level and the ship level. That may come, although we might anticipate formidable methodological difficulties there. My point is that I believe that there is an interconnectedness from bottom to top, and from top to bottom. The challenge is to understand those linkages. What Jon Sumida and David Rosenberg are doing, as I see it, is not so much producing a new Kuhnian paradigm, a new way of explaining anomalous behavior patterns, but rather to say: "Look, too much writing on naval history remains on the fourth or fifth floor, where Cabinets and other bodies took decisions and made assumptions about naval

policy. That process is described as naval history, but the really interesting work to be done is at the third and second floors, where one sees the navies grappling with the world of naval reality: technology, design, firepower, personnel, tactics, strategic options, and so on. Because we know so little about this massive, complex reality, this is where we need the next generation of naval historians to be working. This is why our naval history is special."

To which I would only say "Amen"—except that, even while that critical grunt work is being done, it will be important not to lose sight of the other levels. We can not give the impression that only levels two and three count. Historical experience exists, and can be recaptured, in many different forms. What an integrated naval history can do is to remind us all, including non-naval historians, of another way of looking at the seamless web, another perfectly legitimate and intelligent way of seeking to understand the past. That is what naval historians do better than most, when we understand the full dimension of our subject.

Chapter 11
Hitting the Target: Perspectives on Doing Naval History

Mark R. Shulman[1]

Naval historians would do well to remember Admiral Sir John Fisher. The First Sea Lord once commented of his famed gunnery inspector Percy Scott, "I don't care if he drinks, gambles, and womanizes; he hits the target." In a frequently obtuse discipline, we have sometimes lost sight of the bull's-eye ourselves. In opening this volume with an epitaph, John Hattendorf gives us all hope for revitalization.

Still, Hattendorf implies another outcome. Should naval historians fail to rise to the methodological challenges of new history, should they remain technologically ill-tutored, should they continue to slight bureaucratic process or the realities of naval operations, naval history as a scholarly field of enquiry may soon require its own elegy. For the most part, as James Goldrick notes, naval historians do not even deserve the navies about which they write. More than other historians, we tend either to hagiography or monocausal interpretations.

Compounding the sin, our subjects are among the most influential institutions in history in addition to being among the most technical and arcane. Operational doctrine has become particularly difficult to understand in the twentieth century due to rapid technical and theoretical innovation. Goldrick challenges the historian: "In some circumstances, and there are parallels here in the revolution in modern computing, the context for technological and operational decision making could experience profound changes *within months*, not the years or decades with which earlier eras tended to deal." Are we capable of understanding and explaining these military-technical revolutions? Setting first-rate goals, Commander Goldrick admonishes us to do better and to take the work of Jon Sumida as a standard of excellence.

Sumida and David Rosenberg boldly chart a new direction for naval history, one that rejects the old "core" histories and the "master plans" that have dominated the field since its origins a century ago. Navalist historians of Alfred Thayer Mahan's generation emphasized great men and great battles. Doing so,

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[1] The author would like to thank John Hattendorf, Kenneth J. Hagan and Paul Kennedy for valuable discussions that helped to shape this essay.

they produced highly flawed history, ignorant of the real under-pinnings of strength. Subsequent historians have blithely followed the navalists' path. Great writers—Arthur J. Marder and Samuel Eliot Morison among them—fell victim to Mahanian propaganda, even while the services themselves were moving in a variety of creative directions. Fixated on the process of building battleship-dominated fleets, these historians misconstrued how the US and Royal Navies really functioned. Sumida and Rosenberg argue, in effect, that navies have been far better than their historians, paying more attention to the sinews of war than have their chroniclers.

Calling for a shift in approaches, Sumida and Rosenberg argue for a non-teleological history of sea power. They note that the core histories are ridden with provincial nationalism and favor the role of the great ships as vehicles for achieving national greatness, as it was conceived of by Whig historians of the late nineteenth century. True military effectiveness, Sumida and Rosenberg would argue, was not made inevitable by dreadnoughts. Rather it was achieved by careful attention to making an effective bureaucracy that ensured that funds were well-spent on technological improvements to a variety of fighting systems that enabled the great navies to beat all comers. Jacky Fisher understood that, if E.B. Potter did not.

Political scientist Robert Jervis echoes this argument, suggesting that "it may be useful to think of navies as causes and as effects." In contrast to Mahan and his followers who had portrayed navies as the cause of national greatness, Jervis concurs with Sumida and Rosenberg; nothing was inevitable. Furthermore, navies have historically played a variety of roles. Stronger fleets, for instance, might not always have enhanced a nation's defenses, because they can generate security dilemmas in which "attempts by a state to gain security can make others less secure despite the fact that this is not the state's intention."[2] Indeed, this complicated dynamic helps to explain the origins of the First World War.

Volker Berghahn picks up on this point more specifically, addressing the German domestic political and social concerns that helped generate the Anglo-German security dilemma of 1889-1914. "The Tirpitz Plan had, if nothing else, a dual purpose: It was to challenge the Royal Navy and the international status quo . . . [and] it was also to shield the German Navy from the legislative powers of the Reichstag." Traditional realist theories of the origins of the generic security dilemma frequently ignore the domestic pressures to build powerful forces. Berghahn presents a more balanced portrait of the 1897 bill. "The Kaiser's proposed navy has been called a fleet against two parliaments.'" Because of the effectiveness of Kaiser's bureaucracy and Tirpitz's technological and political savvy, the impact of this political move was magnified many times over. Jervis

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[2] In labelling and analyzing dynamics such as the security dilemma, political science offers one of its greatest services to historians. While historians might implicitly acknowledge them, particularly on a case by case basis, we need the theory to understand how timeless and pervasive they are.

notes, "Thus even if Wilhemine Germany developed a strong navy in part to strengthen the regime domestically, this action changed the international environment and menaced Great Britain." It activated a security dilemma, trapping both powers into a race for security—a race that seemed inevitably to bring war.

Germany's security dilemma would not have occurred if the international threat it presented were not strong and real. German financial and technological skills made the High Seas Fleet a very real threat to the British. This too involved major domestic political changes, far more than the Prussian military would have liked. No longer could the wealthy alone shoulder the burden of increasingly complicated and expensive weapons systems. Financing the great battleships required a shift in the tax burden from the upper to the middle classes of Germany—a transition understood by all to have a fundamental impact on the German polity, including a weakening of the old elite relative to the growing middle classes.

Paul Kennedy's remarks on Alfred Tirpitz's career following the Great War offer some fascinating insights into this situation, suggesting another new avenue for naval historians. Where others have seen navalists as apolitical, Kennedy points to their dedicated social agenda.[3] To some extent they are merely a slightly exaggerated version of the typical military conservative. Kennedy's argument, however, seems to point us in another direction. In it, navalism cloaks domestic political agendas in the garb of *realpolitik*. Going beyond the conservatism, the navalists, at least some of those who built great fleets before 1917, were hoping to reorder society more along the lines of their beloved services, with structure and hierarchy. They intended to channel the resources of the middle classes into the strengthening of the state. They were always looking for foreign threats to justify their attempts to "bring the correct, healthy, firm national policies" to the *Vaterland*. An extension to Kennedy's argument might note the role of these politics in shaping today's "realist" school of international relations.

Commenting on the notion of the *primat der innen-politik*, Robert Wood responds, "But of course! Does anyone seriously believe that any military developments are simply responses to the general problem of international anarchy and to external challenges posed by other states?" Lacking a clear and present danger, Wood notes, states have little more than domestic politics to guide their preparations for war. As war becomes imminent, however, they must face the international realities. It is at that point that comparative history becomes particularly valuable.

Paul Halpern provides a case study of how one can break out of nationalistic thinking. Having mastered the relevant languages, scripts, and archives, he

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[3] For one influential example, Samuel Huntington's seminal work on *The Soldier and the State* also marginalizes and plays down the politics of naval officers, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957). For comparison, see Vincent Davis *The Admirals' Lobby* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967).

demonstrates latitudinal comparisons in a single period, especially for evaluating the question of which has primacy when: domestic or international politics? Echoing Kennedy's remarks on the domestic agendas of navalists, Halpern offers the quintessential case of Jean Darlan. In the late nineteenth-century Italian navy, Halpern also finds a test for the understanding the role that finance and industry play in shaping foreign policy and reflecting domestic policy. Berghahn's work argues that navalism was highly important in determining the shape of the modern German polity. My own book makes a similar argument for the United States. Tirpitz and Mahan had contemporaries in Italy who also saw the manifold ways in which a navy's technological, financial and industrial progress would propel a nation to great power status.[4]

Halpern's contribution also suggests the need for more research on the role of finance, along the lines suggested by Sumida and Rosenberg. As with the case of Britain's services during the Great War, the Austrian navy's greatest enemy was frequently its sister service—the army.[5] Rather than "jointness," Halpern pointedly refers to the interdepartmental politics as "diplomacy."

If Halpern's comparisons of contemporaneous navies and armies can be called latitudinal, William Thompson's approach is longitudinal. Examination of ten or more centuries of sea power gives his work a perspective remarkable for its breadth and its ability to transcend the historical moment. As such, it offers much to students of navies, sea power, and international relations.

This rich set of data allows Thompson to compare the evolution of great sea powers, sometimes centuries apart. While the historian might balk at this approach at first glance, he or she must keep in mind how few of the parameters of sea power have fundamentally changed over the centuries. The physical geography has remained the same for tens of thousands of years. Moreover, twentieth-century battles almost invariably have taken place in the same locations as those of centuries prior.[6] Also, the fundamental unit of political interaction, the nation-state, has remained pre-eminent for at least three but possibly as many as ten centuries.[7] Even the building blocks of sea power—ships and fleets—retained many of their essential characteristics between Actium and

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[4] See Richard A. Webster, *Industrial Imperialism in Italy, 1908-1915* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Berghahn, *Die Tirpitz-Plan* (Dusseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1971); Shulman, *Navalism and the Emergence of US Naval Power, 1882-1893* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995).

[5] See Jon T. Sumida, "Forging the Trident: British Naval Industrial Logistics, 1914-1918" in John A. Lynn, ed., *Feeding Mars: Logistics in Western Warfare from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993); and Lawrence Sondhaus, *The Naval Policy of Austria-Hungary, 1867-1918: Navalism, Industrial Development and the Politics of Dualism* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1994).

[6] This observation is laid out most succinctly in Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

[7] The primacy of the nation state is being challenged. See Roy Godson, "Transstate Security," in Godson, Richard Shultz, and George Quester, *Security Studies for the Twenty-First Century* (Washington: Brassey's, forthcoming) for this thesis and a survey of the literature.

Dogger Bank.[8] As Thompson notes in his final proposition, "There are no trends extant—technological, economic, political, or military—which suggest an imminent diminution in the strategic leverage of sea power. If the coming of the railroad, internal combustion engine, and missile, nuclear, and space eras could not demote the strategic value of sea power significantly, it is difficult to see what could emerge to do so over the next several decades."

This remarkable data base has allowed Thompson to derive dozens of generally applicable axioms about the nature of sea power, hegemony, international relations, war and peace, and even polities and regimes. These fifty-two "Thalassological Propositions" could easily generate hundreds of specific historical studies to test them. Thompson challenges the historians to move beyond narrow studies and to examine general propositions. He challenges us to put history to the test; what can it teach us?

Implicitly Thompson asks if we should be leaving the lessons of history to practitioners of all other disciplines besides history. Recently several of the very best military and diplomatic historians have also attempted to nudge the profession into taking up that gauntlet. Michael Howard's *The Lessons of History* does so in a gently gracious way, nonetheless reminding us of the costs of misinterpretation. Ernest May and Richard Neustadt, with fewer apologies, encourage the use of the past. Eliot Cohen and John Gooch sharply point to the costs of failing to learn from history. And yet, naval historians have been among those most hesitant to draw lessons from a rich and varied data set.[9]

Nicholas Rodger's work rivals Thompson's for its longitudinal span and Halpern's for its latitudinal scope. His current project analyses the various British navies over ten centuries as they interacted with dozens of rivals and allies across the globe. And yet, he acknowledges great impediments to improving the field of naval history. "There are real obstacles, both practical and psychological, to mastering high technologies, especially more or less completely extinct technologies" such as weapons system long abandoned. The same must be said for attempting to understand defunct bureaucracies, especially those in countries that have suffered the ruination of war or accident. To this must be added the burden of speaking and reading a Babel of tongues, for navies invariably link peoples of different languages. This myriad of structural impediments has led, according to Rodger, to naval history falling into two mutually exclusive camps.

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[8] See also Colin S. Gray, *The Leverage of Seapower* (New York: The Free Press, 1992) for a recent exposition on the timelessness of sea power. Also see Geoffrey Till, editor, *Seapower: Theory and Practice* (Portland, Oregon: International Specialized Book Services, 1994).

[9] Michael Howard, *The Lessons of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); Ernest May, *Lessons from the Past: the Use and Mis-use of History in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); May and Richard Neustadt, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers* (New York: Free Press, 1986); Eliot Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: Free Press, 1990). See also the varieties of reactions to Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987).

On the one hand, [are] those with an education as historians, more or less accustomed to taking a large view and to locating their findings in an historical context. . . . Those who do understand, on the other hand, sometimes display a narrowly antiquarian pleasure in the amassing of facts, or supposed facts, without asking themselves why they are interesting or important. They may even claim that technology alone is a sufficient explanation for the course of naval history.

These are two hands of the same beast: ignorance about the highly technical but extremely influential roles that science, finance, and administration play in society. Fortunately, he notes, good technical histories are now being written. Currently, it appears that the Military Technical Revolution (or Revolution in Military Affairs) of the 1990s may be accelerating this trend, driving research into the roles technological change plays in shaping and reflecting the evolution of strategy.[10]

Military historian Dennis Showalter comments on other impediments to the improvement of naval history as a field. He notes the Anglo-centricity of the profession—a bias which leads one to find lessons from the British and American experiences.[11] These are critical but by no means the only histories worth exploring. Showalter also notes the insularity of naval communities, at least as far as they relate to (or fail to) their home societies. He explains, "Navies are the most self-referencing of armed forces, and can possess a correspondingly powerful dynamic." This particularization, Showalter suggests, is reflected in the isolation of the discipline.

Each writer notes ways to improve "Doing Naval History." Each of their valid and useful insights calls for a systematic response and leads me to make a modest proposal. It offers prescriptions in three crucial areas: the procurement and use of resources for understanding history, the writing of history, and its teaching. Each of these calls for the establishment of an American Naval Records Society (ANRS).

Resources

Like its British counterpart, an American NRS could publish edited documents and it could also help to promote and to coordinate research, writing, and teaching at every level. Much as the British society operates, an American NRS would publish key source materials for its open membership, allowing scholars

[10] For some interesting works, see John W. Bodnar, "The Military Technical Revolution: From Hardware to Information," *Naval War College Review*, 46 (Summer 1993), pp. ; Martin van Creveld, *Transformation of War* (New York: Free Press, 1991); Stephen P. Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Andrew F. Krepinevich, "Keeping Pace with the Military Technical Revolution," *Issues in Science and Technology* (Summer 1994); and N.A. Lomov, ed., *Scientific-Technical Progress and the Revolution in Military Affairs: A Soviet View* (Moscow, 1972; Washington, DC: GPO, 1980).

[11] Indeed, Showalter might have noted that a preponderance of the contributors to this volume have either written on British history or have studied or taught at English universities.

to identify and elucidate key sources for insights into naval history. In the past, the Naval Institute Press in Annapolis and the Naval Historical Center in Washington have performed these tasks, and they should be encouraged to continue them. But an ANRS could provide a broader selection base of documents, exploring issues and insights independent from market forces and service image.

Electronic data storage and retrieval systems open myriad possibilities for an ANRS. These machines have vastly reduced the costs for preparing and reproducing documentary collections in several areas. Furthermore, they offer unparalleled access. Text can be stored in previously inconceivable quantities. Furthermore, cross-indexing is far simpler, faster and more efficient, allowing users to access any stored information almost instantaneously. The hardware for such a storage system is not expensive, and the prices are moving down, rather than up. In the early 1980s, $400-500 would buy a drive that supported a disk capable of storing 250 pages. Today that much would purchase a 100-megabyte hard disk that stores 75,000 pages.[12]

Compact Disks with Read-Only Memory (CD-ROM) are also proliferating, with most new personal computers including that technology only recently available just to the wealthiest of institutional buyers. Their storage and retrieval capacities are measured in the gigabytes (billions of bytes). So great is their capacity that they can store images as well as text. For instance, complete facsimiles of *The Abraham Lincoln Legal Papers* are currently being stored on CD-ROM. Their editor notes that twenty disks store the images that would otherwise have required some 200 reels of microfilm. "Jukebox CD-ROM players hold up to 64 discs at a time and make any of over 1.5 million images available to a researcher in less than 5 seconds." The CD-ROM edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* "allows scholars to accomplish tasks almost impossible in the printed volumes. . . . For example, one can . . . determine which words English colonists appropriated from the Indian tribes of North America."[13]

Beyond CD-ROM the ambitious can turn to on-line electronic data bases. Already the University of California's *Thesaurus Linguae Grecae* encompasses a 57 million-word collection of 99 percent of all extant Greek writings from Homer to 600 A.D. The American and French Research on the Treasury of the French Language (ARTFL) is nearly three times that size.[14] Anyone who has ever used Lexis/Nexis will testify to the remarkable power and flexibility of these systems. Furthermore, with the growth of the internet, such databases could be filled in (either manually or with scanners) from an unlimited number

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[12] David Chesnutt, "Presidential Editions: The Promise and Problems of Technology," *Documentary Editing*, 16 (September 1994), pp. 70-77. Figures cited are from page 71.

[13] Martha L. Benner, "*The Abraham Lincoln Legal Papers*: The Development of the Complete Facsimile Edition on CD-ROM" *Documentary Editing*, 16 (December, 1994). pp. 100-107. Quotations are from Benner, "*Lincoln*," 101 and Chesnutt, "Presidential Editions," p. 71.

[14] Chesnutt, "Presidential Editions," p. 71.

of remote locations. Professors with teams of bursary students or scholars working in libraries around the globe could input sources and documents. All this appears to require an agency to house, coordinate, regulate and disseminate these products. Printed volumes could simply extract from and refer to these larger collections, providing more complete explanatory annotation.[15] How else will we ever hope to see the sources for naval or maritime history of impoverished or out of the way countries? How else will anyone be able to afford to write truly multi-national history?

Next among the NRS's tasks would be promotion and coordination of the field. The U.S. Navy's Naval Historical Center already does some admirable promoting, but more could surely be done and best by a non-service institution. For example, when the Smithsonian Institution abolishes its last curatorship in naval history should the NHC protest? I think not. But a consortium of concerned historians might be able to lobby for its maintenance. The same would go for the chairs at Stanford and Harvard universities—both of which were donated for naval and maritime history and neither of which is filled by a naval or maritime historian. When the American Historical Association fails to include any panels on naval history for years running, should the navy intercede? No, but the NRS could coordinate a couple of panels—panels integrated within the regular program instead of marginalized in a special sub-meeting. They could be even further integrated, with non-naval historians or even non-historians as commentators—thus providing different and useful perspectives. They could also mix senior and junior practitioners to provide the professional encouragement younger people need in these tough times.

Writing

This present volume—along with its predecessor, John Hattendorf's *Ubi Sumus?* (with its extraordinary breadth of coverage)—bring out the varieties of strengths and weaknesses in the writing of naval and maritime history across the globe. In terms of this broad scope, one is drawn immediately to the United States Navy (USN), because of its great importance. Despite numerous contributions to American naval history, writers on this subject have rarely shown the conceptual and methodological innovation one would expect, given the current importance of their topic. While the writing of the history of the USN has come far in the past quarter century, we have miles to go before we sleep. These short-comings have been illuminated elsewhere.[16] Suffice it to say here,

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[15] A partial list of these series might include: ships' musters and logs, reports on fleet exercises, mens' medical records, blue-prints and technical details of construction, and Congressional hearings—all of which would be far more useful if stored in digitalized and manipulable form. The US Naval Academy Archives and Museum has collected its pictures on one such laser disk that might provide a model for this type of collection.

[16] See Kenneth J. Hagan and Shulman, "Mahan Plus One Hundred: The Status of US Naval History," and David A. Rosenberg, "Beyond Toddlerhood: Thoughts on the Future of American Naval History"

that it needs to embrace methodologies of newer and brighter fields in the study of the history of culture, society, technology, finance, and administration.[17] The mere fact of an ANRS with newsletters, publications, and meetings might breath new life into the field.

In particular, the ANRS could also coordinate research, most crucially at the international level. Presaging the comments in this volume of Professors Halpern and Rodger, Ronald Spector has pointed out that the languages one would need to write a *histoire totale* of the Pacific War would include not only English and Japanese, and Russian, French and Dutch, but also the various Polynesian, Micronesian, Melanesian, and Chinese tongues. Only a group of historians (and probably anthropologists as well) could begin this effort. Working through the already established International Commission on Military History and its American branch (USCMH), the ANRS could bring together a panel of scholars on this topics, as well as for such studies of more regionalized topics as a strategic history of the North Sea, or a social history of sailors in the Far East—including the multi-ethnic communities that fed them in Singapore, Manila, Hong Kong, San Francisco, Honolulu, and New York. Because the sea does indeed connect all things, its human history should provide the bulk of any truly international history. And yet, no man or woman can attempt it alone.

Teaching

An American NRS could also coordinate teaching—the third major area in need of change. Although each teacher's courses are highly personal, few would fail to benefit from a support network providing suggested syllabi with readings, themes, goals and even possible lecture topics. Currently, young professors start from scratch. There does not even exist a syllabus bank, let alone a central audio-visual collection from which he or she can order slides or movies—virtually required media for teaching the MTV generation. While this video-literacy should not be pandered to, neither should it be ignored.[18]

The American NRS could also teach graduate and undergraduate students, much as the mid-west consortium for military history allows for a sharing of

in John B. Hattendorf, ed., *Ubi Sumus? The State of Naval and Maritime History* (Newport: Naval War College Press, 1994).

[17] See this author's "Why Men Fight" in *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History*, (Autumn 1995) of the following remarkable books which approach army or marine combat units from innovative perspectives informed by new social and cultural history: Omer Bartov, *The Eastern Front, 1941-1945, German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare* (London: Macmillan, 1985) and *Hitler's Army* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Craig Cameron, *American Samurai: Myth, Imagination, and the Conduct of Battle in the First Marine Division, 1941-1951* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and Leonard V. Smith, *Between Mutiny and Obedience: The Case of the French Fifth Infantry Division During World War I* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[18] The mid-west consortium has arrangements to institutionalize this cooperation by covering the expenses of one professor each term to visit a sister institution for teaching and advising and also arranges for commensurate relief of his other departmental burdens.

scarce resources. The approach here would be two-fold: first with a summer institute and the second through shared advisors. A biennial summer institute on naval history would allow graduate students from programs around the country to gather for one intensive course of study in the history, historiography and methodology of naval history. Team-taught to cover more fields, this course would provide the well-spring for growth that the profession needs. The second stage would be a consortium through which Ph.D. students would be able to contact appropriate advisors as they commence their dissertation research. Using telephones, facsimile machines, modems and even the US postal service, a graduate student ought to be able to seek and find knowledgeable advisors for his or her research and writing.[19]

Conclusion

Thucydides set the highest standards in his multi-disciplinary examination of policy, society, logistics, command, and joint operations at the start of his *History of the Peloponnesian War*. "My history is an everlasting possession, not a prize composition which is heard and forgotten." Hard-working, resourceful and intelligent, today's naval historians should aim to do no less. An independent ANRS could foster breadth of research, creativity and coordination in writing and effectiveness in teaching. It could do so in an inexpensive, non-ideological forum. While it would not solve our problems, it could offer a venue for critical improvements in research, writing and teaching.

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[19] At very least, there ought be a syllabus bank—which would cost only reproduction and mailing and could be billed at a fee for service rate. Alternatively, the service could be available through electronic mail at no cost. Later a further service could be added of a week-long seminar on "Teaching Naval History;" this would be more expensive (c. $1500 per student, plus professors). Similar courses are already offered to ROTC and NROTC instructors but are not generally open to academic faculty.